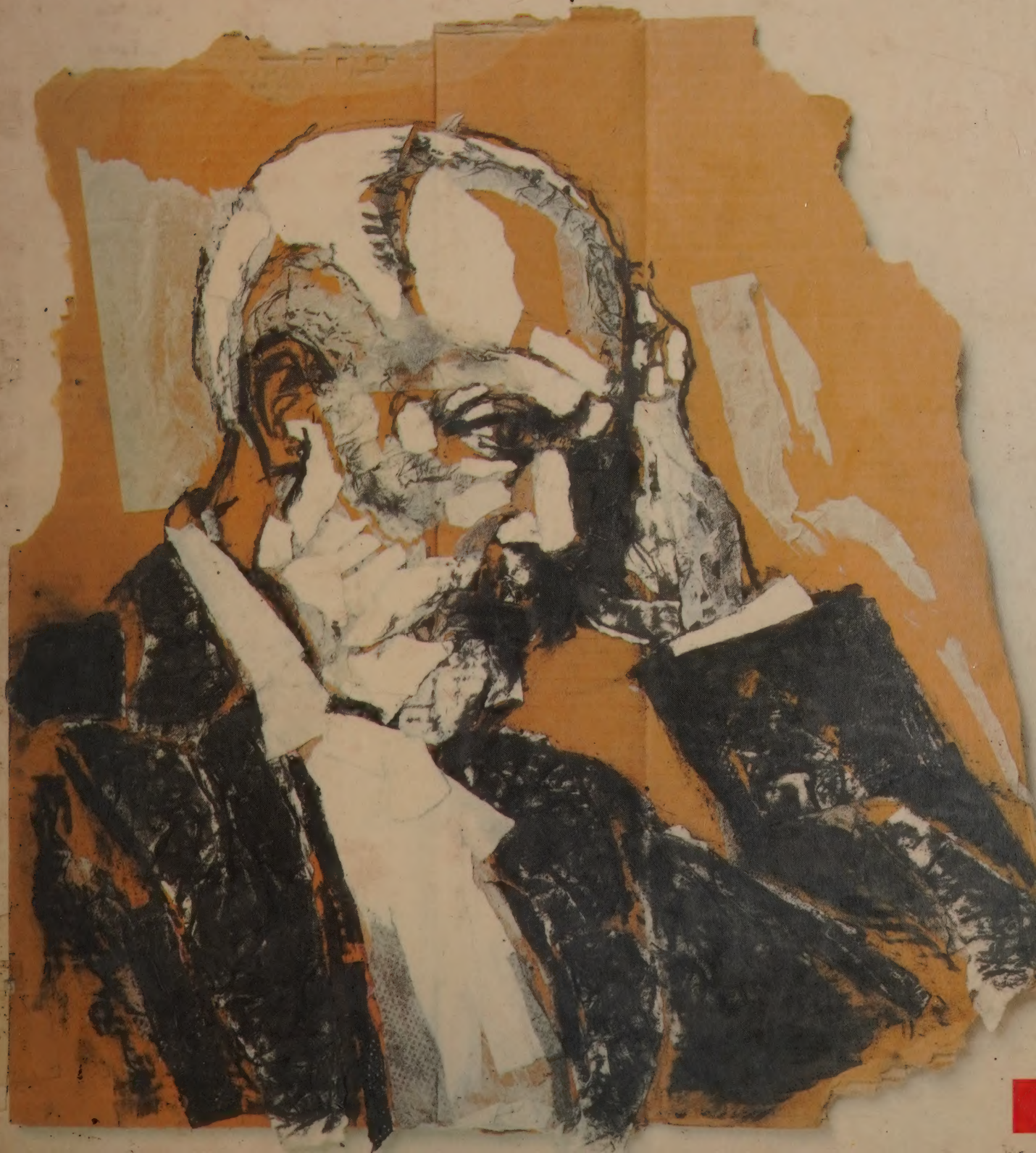
TCHAIKOVSKY

Greatest Hits



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TCHAIKOVSKY

Greatest Hits

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PETER TCHAIKOVSKY
1840 - 1893

Peter (Piotr) Ilyitch Tchaikovsky was born in Kamsko-Votinsk, Government of Viatka, on the 7th May 1840. His parents had little feeling for music, but at the age of seven he began regular piano lessons with a local teacher. His real progress in music began when the Tchaikovsky family moved to St. Petersburg in 1850, and the boy was placed under a good teacher, Filipov. At the same time he entered preparatory classes for the School of Jurisprudence.

At the School of Jurisprudence, music was not neglected. Tchaikovsky continued piano lessons with Kundinger, and also joined the choral class directed by Lomakin. However, neither Tchaikovsky nor his teachers recognized any outstanding musical talent, and Tchaikovsky was apparently satisfied to study diligently and, at the age of nineteen, to pass as a first-class clerk into the Ministry of Justice. Music was a hobby, and until he was twenty Tchaikovsky had accomplished little more than a certain skill at improvisation, and the composition of some dance pieces which he did not even bother to write down.

With the study of theory under Zaremba of the Russian Musical Society, later to become the Conservatory, Tchaikovsky's approach to music took a new turn. Although he did not give up his job as a clerk, he felt the time was coming when he would have to devote himself wholly to music. When the time came, in 1863, it was a particularly bad time, for his father found himself in financial difficulties, and was able to allow him only sufficient to cover his board and lodging. He had a few pupils, but his income at this time was no more than $12 per month.

While studying composition and instrumentation with Zaremba, Tchaikovsky was studying harmony, counterpoint and the church modes with Anton Rubinstein. He worked hard, and received his diploma in 1865. The work composed for his diploma was a setting of Schiller's "Ode To Joy," for which he received a silver medal.

Early in 1866 the Moscow Conservatory opened its doors. The director, Nicholas Rubinstein, offered Tchaikovsky a post as professor of harmony. The salary was not high, but Nicholas Rubinstein, with whom he lived, proved a good and loyal friend. He regularly played Tchaikovsky's earliest compositions at the concerts of the Russian Musical Society, of which he was conductor. These works included a *Festival Overture on the Danish National Hymn,* and the *First Symphony.* However, if he was appreciated in Moscow, he was certainly not in St. Petersburg. Anton Rubinstein, to whom Tchaikovsky was devoted, for some reason – jealousy has been suggested – treated his compositions with coldness and indifference. Naturally, he felt deeply wounded by Anton Rubinstein's attitude.

In addition to other works, Tchaikovsky completed an opera, *The Voyevode,* during his first two years in Moscow. Such hard work, in addition to his teaching, brought on nervous disorders, and from then on he spoke and wrote of his longing for a quiet country life. Only much later was he able to bring this longing to fulfilment. Meanwhile, every summer he paid long visits to his beloved sister, Alexandra Davidov, whose husband was manager of a large estate at Kamenka, near Kiev.

During a visit to St. Petersburg in 1868, Tchaikovsky for the first time came into contact with the "nationalist" group, and temporarily at least, could not resist the influence of Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov and Stassov. The most obvious result was the *Second Symphony,* based on Ukrainian folksongs. However, he was never wholeheartedly in sympathy with the "nationalists," and was later to criticize them quite harshly.

In the same year, 1868, Tchaikovsky fell in love with a Belgian singer, Desiree Artot, who was visiting St. Petersburg with an opera company. But he quickly began to speculate on the unhappiness that would probably result from the marriage of a poor musician and a successful prima donna. The problem was solved for him when, quite unexpectedly, she married the Spanish baritone, Mariano Padilla, in Warsaw. She and Tchaikovsky remained friends for many years.

The years to 1875 were immensely productive. Among the works from this period were three operas, the *Third Symphony,* and the *Piano Concerto in B flat minor.* The last met with severe criticism – though Hans von Bulow described it as "... perfect and mature in form – in the sense that the intentions and craftsmanship are everywhere concealed ..." Perhaps many of the criticisms were justified, for the work as we know it now is the completely revised version of 1889.

In addition to his other activities, Tchaikovsky became music critic for the *Russky Viedomosty.* It is hardly surprising that by the winter of 1875 he was on the verge of a nervous collapse, and that he intensely longed to be able to devote himself to composition alone. In the summer of 1876 he was in Vichy for a cure, and then went as music critic to the first Bayreuth Festival.

Nothing happened on his return to Russia to cheer his spirits. His opera *Vakula the Smith* was a failure – he himself described it as a "brilliant failure." His *Romeo and Juliet* was hissed in Vienna, and had a cool reception in Paris.

The worst disaster of all was his marriage, in the summer of 1877. Why he, a homosexual, should suddenly announce his intention to marry a woman with whom he was not the least in love, but who loved him desperately, is not known for sure, though he may have hoped for some sort of redemption, and freedom from homosexuality which always aroused deep feelings of guilt. The marriage lasted nine weeks. Then Tchaikovsky fled from Moscow to St. Petersburg, where he collapsed. His doctor ordered him abroad in the care of his brother Anatol.

If he was brought to despair by one woman – though he never blamed her in the least – he was saved by another woman. Nadezhda Fileretovna von Meck was a wealthy widow who scorned society, but loved music. From time to time she engaged young musicians to become part of her household. Debussy was to be one such. However, in 1877, a violinist, Kotek was the incumbent. He told her of Tchaikovsky's trials and tribulations. As she admired the composer's work greatly she wanted to help him. First she gave him some commissions, and then persuaded him to accept a yearly allowance sufficient to allow him to devote himself entirely to composition. Although he corresponded with Madame von Meck, and stayed on her estate during her absence, he was never to meet her in person.

After the disaster of his marriage, Tchaikovsky spent a year in Switzerland and Italy. It is strange that during this period, when he wrote of himself as "finished," he wrote some of his most charming music, including much piano music. From this time, Tchaikovsky was constantly on the move, though for various periods he did achieve his "quiet country life."

By the time he was forty, Tchaikovsky's reputation in Russia was secure. By 1880 – though with some setbacks – his fame was beginning to spread abroad. His *Piano Concerto in B flat minor* was a triumph in Berlin, Budapest and New York, and in Paris his *Third String Quartet* and his *Serenade* for Violin and Piano were successful. However, for almost a year he composed nothing. Then, in December 1881 he began the *Piano Trio* Op. 50 "in memory of a great artist" – Nicholas Rubinstein. This is surely one the greatest Piano Trios of all time.

In 1884 Tchaikovsky's opera *Mazeppa* was given almost simultaneously in Moscow and St. Petersburg. It could hardly be said to have been a success. However, in the Fall of the same year *Eugene Onegin* was given in St. Petersburg, and quickly became the favorite native opera with Russian audiences.

For a time, Tchaikovsky achieved his "quiet country life." First in a large house in Maidanovo near Klin, and then in a smaller house nearby. He regulated his life almost to a time-table, and was cheerful and content. But then came a desire to conduct his own works, and to show himself to his public. He began a series of concert tours, with intervals spent at Maidanovo in composition. He went to Leipzig, Berlin, Prague, Hamburg, Paris and London, and everywhere was applauded and feted. Yet there was always, as he put it, "a drop of gall in my honey-pot," and concertizing success only made him long for his "quiet country life." Once he wrote to Nadezhda von Meck, "When I am quite old and past composing, I shall devote myself to growing flowers."

At the beginning of 1889, Tchaikovsky started on a second concert tour. In Hamburg, Brahms came to the rehearsal of his *Fifth Symphony*. Incomprehensibly, only the finale met with his disapproval. Apparently the meeting was cordial, but undoubtedly Tchaikovsky was more in sympathy with the music of Wagner than that of Brahms. In London, Tchaikovsky conducted his *First Suite* and the *Piano Concerto in B flat minor*, with Sapelnikov as soloist.

On his return to Russia, Tchaikovsky completed his Ballet, *The Sleeping Princess*. This was produced in January 1890 in St. Petersburg. Like *Eugene Onegin* it disappointed at first, but eventually became one of Tchaikovsky's most popular works. The only comment on the work made by the Tsar, who attended the gala rehearsal was, "very nice." The production of Tchaikovsky's next Opera, *The Queen of Spades* met with the approval of the public, but not of the critics. Next to *Eugene Onegin*, however, it has proved to be Tchaikovsky's most popular opera.

Towards the end of 1890 came what was to prove for Tchaikovsky one of the most bitter experiences of his life – a break with Nadezhda von Meck. She wrote to Tchaikovsky that she was in financial difficulties, but assured him that this would not affect his allowance. Tchaikovsky replied with a sympathetic letter, insisting that matters of money would not affect their friendship. Then he learned that her financial difficulties had ended, and could not help feeling that her letter had been only an excuse to get rid of him. It was a sad affair – Nadezhda von Meck was suffering from a severe nervous disorder, and Tchaikovsky felt continually depressed and tired.

In 1891 came an invitation to conduct in the U.S.A. which was accepted. Tchaikovsky also promised to write a one-act opera and a Ballet, *The Nutcracker* for the Imperial Opera. In March, he was to conduct a concert of his own works in Paris. His brother, Modest, who joined him was distressed to see his mental and physical state. The news of the death of his beloved sister, Alexandra Davidov, did nothing to improve his condition.

He set sail for New York on 18th April 1891, and arrived on the 27th. He gave four concerts in New York, one in Baltimore and one in Philadelphia. Everywhere he was received with open arms, and every concert was a triumph. His visit was a short one. By the end of May, he was back in Maidanovo, busy on the composition of *The Nutcracker* and the opera which was eventually to be called *Iolanthe*. At this time his physical state was good, but his correspondence was full of sadness and discontent.

Early in 1892, Tchaikovsky was on his travels again, but as usual, every time he left Russia he was filled with longing to return. In the summer he was back in Klin (he had moved to what was to be his last home, and is now a Tchaikovsky Museum) and started work on his sixth symphony.

After a short visit to Vienna to conduct at the Exhibition, he returned to St. Petersburg for the rehearsals of *Iolanthe* and *The Nutcracker*. When they were produced before the Tsar and his court, they both had slight success. *Iolanthe* never grew in popularity, but *The Nutcracker*, of course, soon became almost everyone's favorite Ballet.

During the composition of the *'Pathetic' Symphony* Tchaikovsky was in a much happier mood. His brother believed its composition was "an act of exorcism" which enabled him to cast out all the black spirits that had obsessed him throughout the years. Tchaikovsky wrote to his nephew Vladimir Davidov that he intended to call the work *A Programme Symphony*, but that the programme would remain an enigma to all. He had sketched out the first movement in four days, and the rest of the work was clear in his head, down to the finale, which would be an *adagio* of considerable dimensions.

But Tchaikovsky's mood did not last. In May 1893, he wrote to his nephew from London:

> *I suffer, not only from torments that cannot be put into words (there is one place in the sixth symphony where they seem to me to be adequately expressed), but of a hatred of strangers and an indefinable terror – though of what, the devil only knows.*

The London occasion was two concerts given by the London Philharmonic Society to honor five composers who were to receive honorary degrees of Doctor of Music from the University of Cambridge – Boito, Saint-Saens, Max Bruch, Tchaikovsky and Grieg.

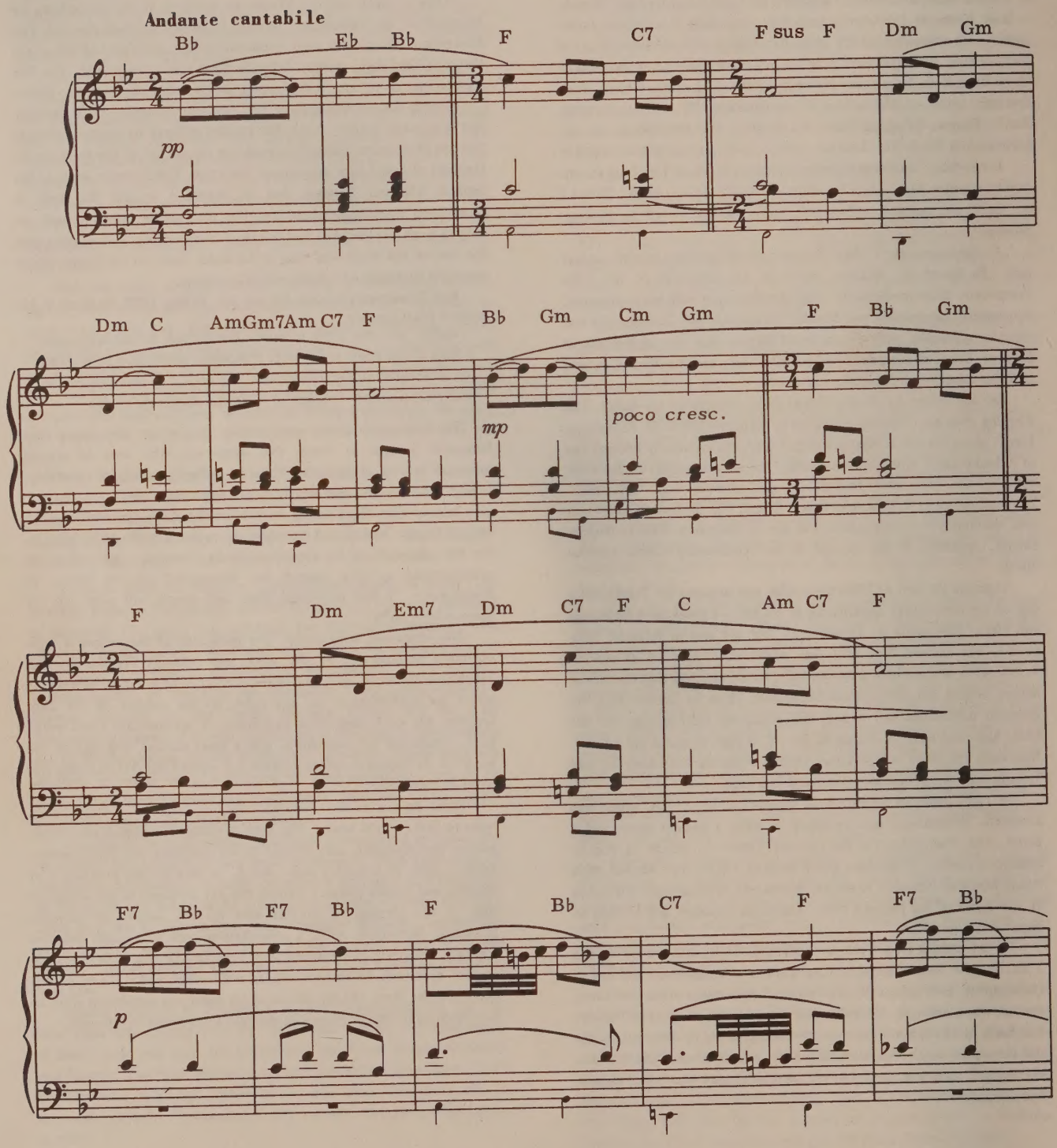
Back in Klin, Tchaikovsky completed the *Sixth Symphony* by the end of August. He believed that this was his finest work. As he left Klin for the rehearsals of the symphony in St. Petersburg, he said to his companions as they passed the churchyard of the village of Frolovskoye, "I shall be buried there, and people will point out my grave as they go by."

The rehearsals went badly. The musicians of the orchestra were obviously unimpressed by the work, and although Tchaikovsky still believed in the work, he feared that the attitude of the musicians would affect the performance. He was right. At the concert on the 28th October, the work made little impression. A performance a few weeks later, conducted by Napravnik, was a great success, and started the work on its meteoric career around the world. But Tchaikovsky was never to know this.

Three days after the concert – on 31st October – Tchaikovsky went to bed in good health. The next morning he complained of indigestion and insomnia, and refused to eat anything. He did, however, drink a glass of unboiled water which, in view of the prevalence of cholera, was hardly prudent. During the day he began to feel worse, so that in the evening his brother sent for the doctor, an eminent physician, Bertenson. After a consultation with his equally eminent brother, Bertenson pronounced that Tchaikovsky was suffering from cholera. Gradually he became weaker and weaker, and at 3 a.m. on 6th November he died. His last words as his mind was wandering seem to have been addressed to Nadezhda von Meck in accents of reproach.

ANDANTE CANTABILE
from the Quartet Op. 11

P. I. Tchaikovsky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pp
Dm C AmGm7Am C7 F B♭ Gm Cm Gm F B♭ Gm
mp
poco cresc.
F Dm Em7 Dm C7 F C Am C7 F
F7 B♭ F7 B♭ F B♭ C7 F F7 B♭
p

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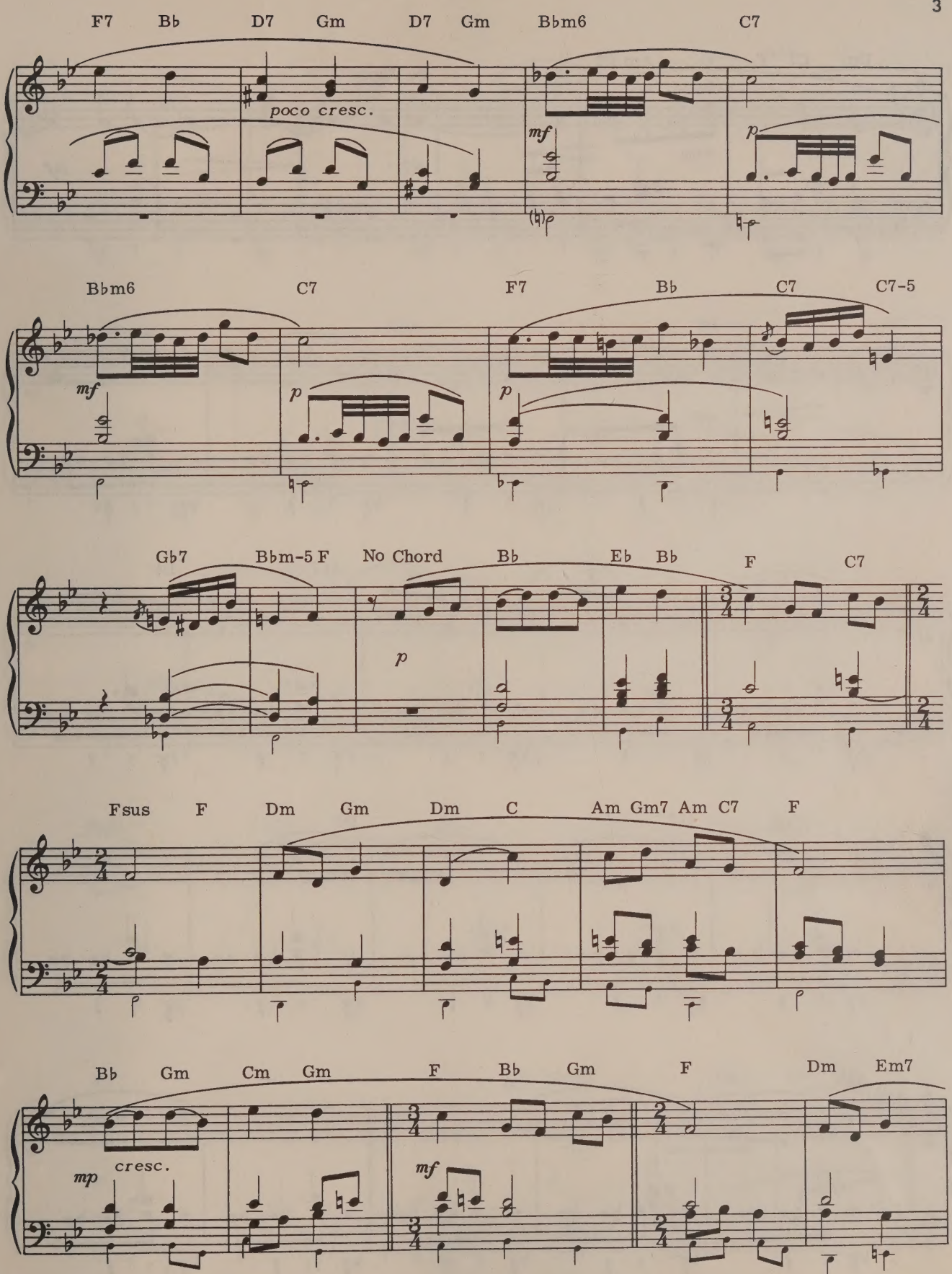
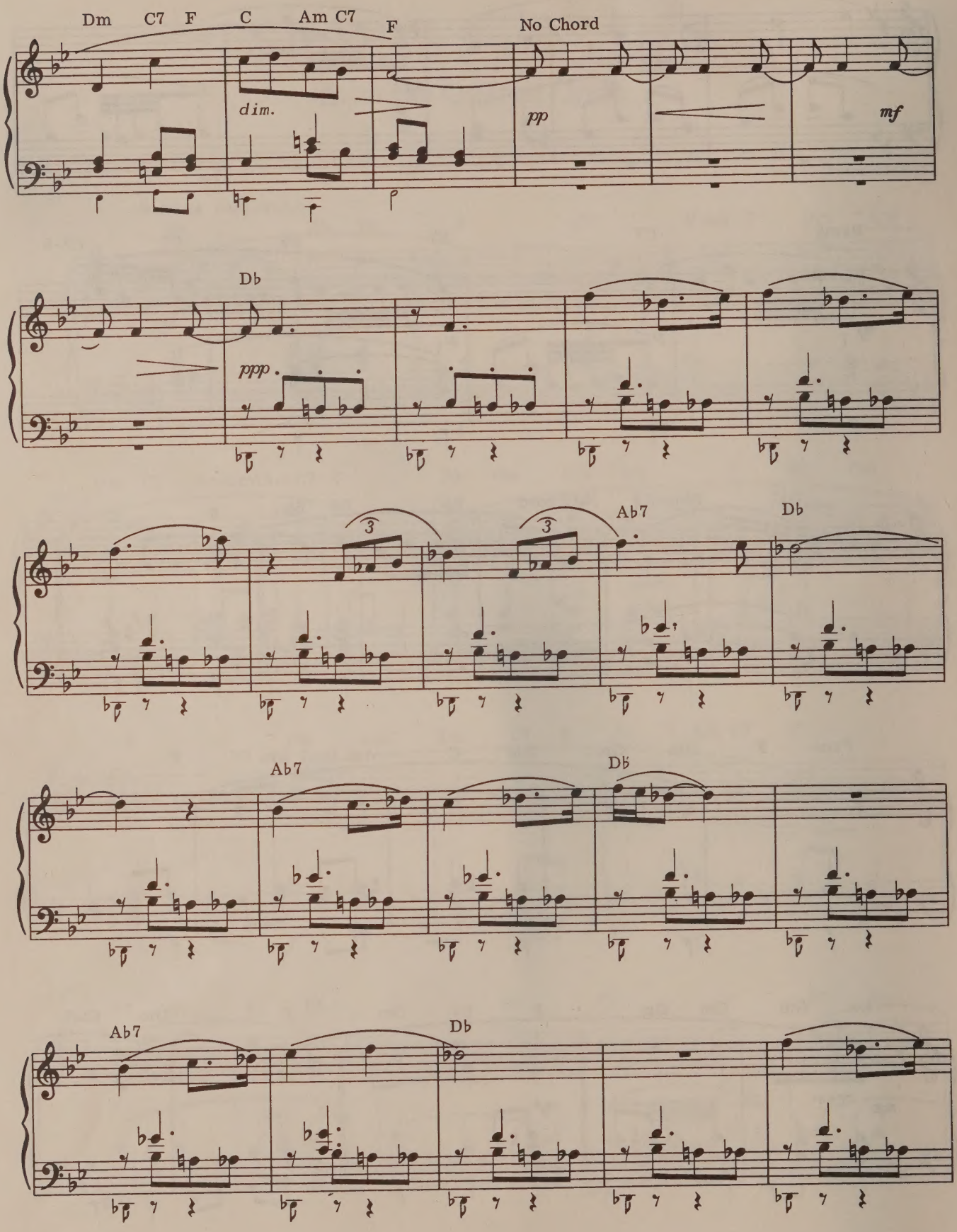

F7 B♭ D7 Gm D7 Gm B♭m6 C7
poco cresc.
mf
p
B♭m6 C7 F7 B♭ C7 C7-5
mf
p
p
G♭7 B♭m-5 F No Chord B♭ E♭ B♭ F C7
p
Fsus F Dm Gm Dm C Am Gm7 Am C7 F
B♭ Gm Cm Gm F B♭ Gm F Dm Em7
mp
cresc.
mf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No Chord
dim.
pp
mf
Db
ppp
Ab7
Db
Ab7
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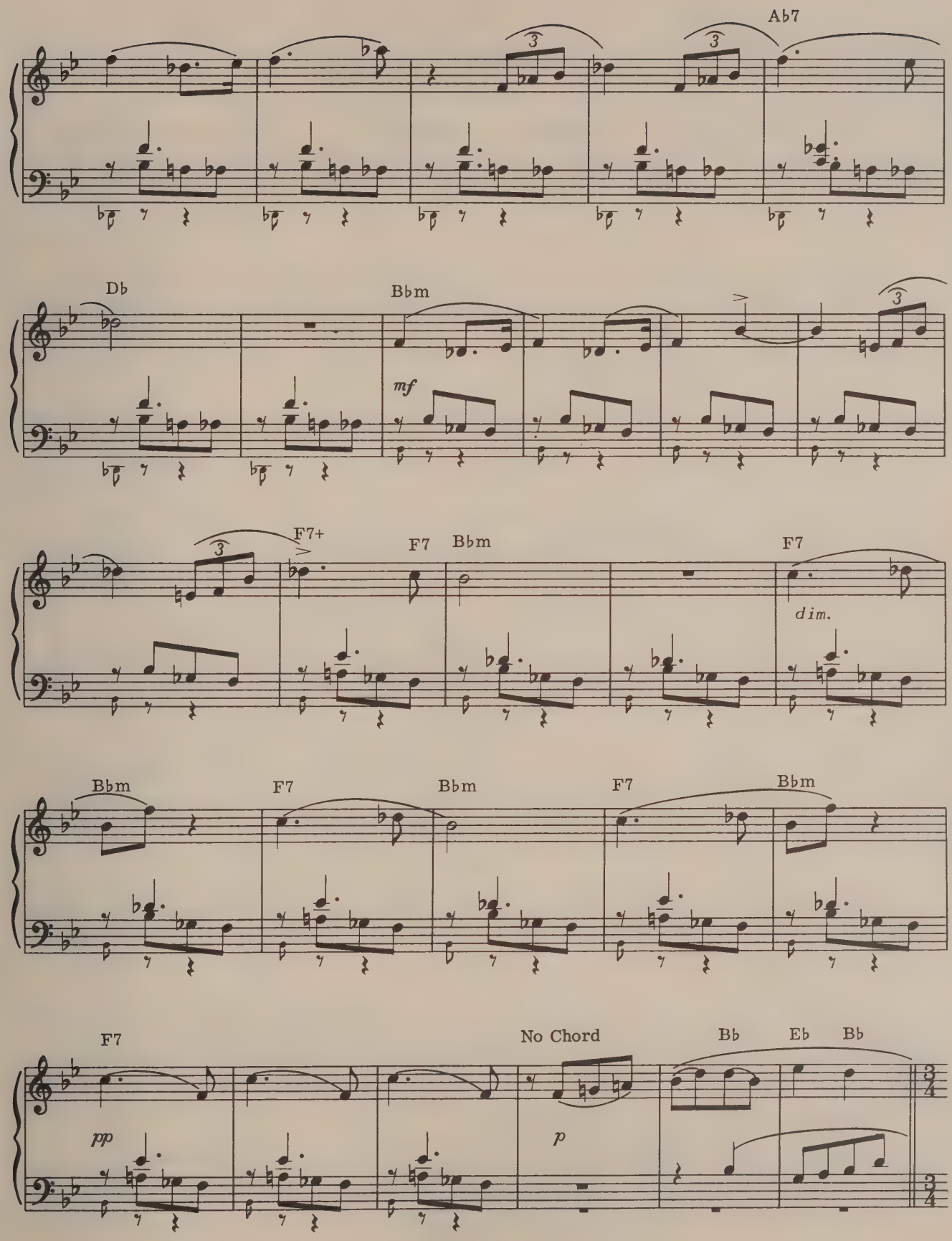
Ab7
Db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Db
Bbm
mf
F7+
F7
Bbm
F7
dim.
Bbm
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F7
Bbm
F7
pp
No Chord
p
Bb
Eb
Bb
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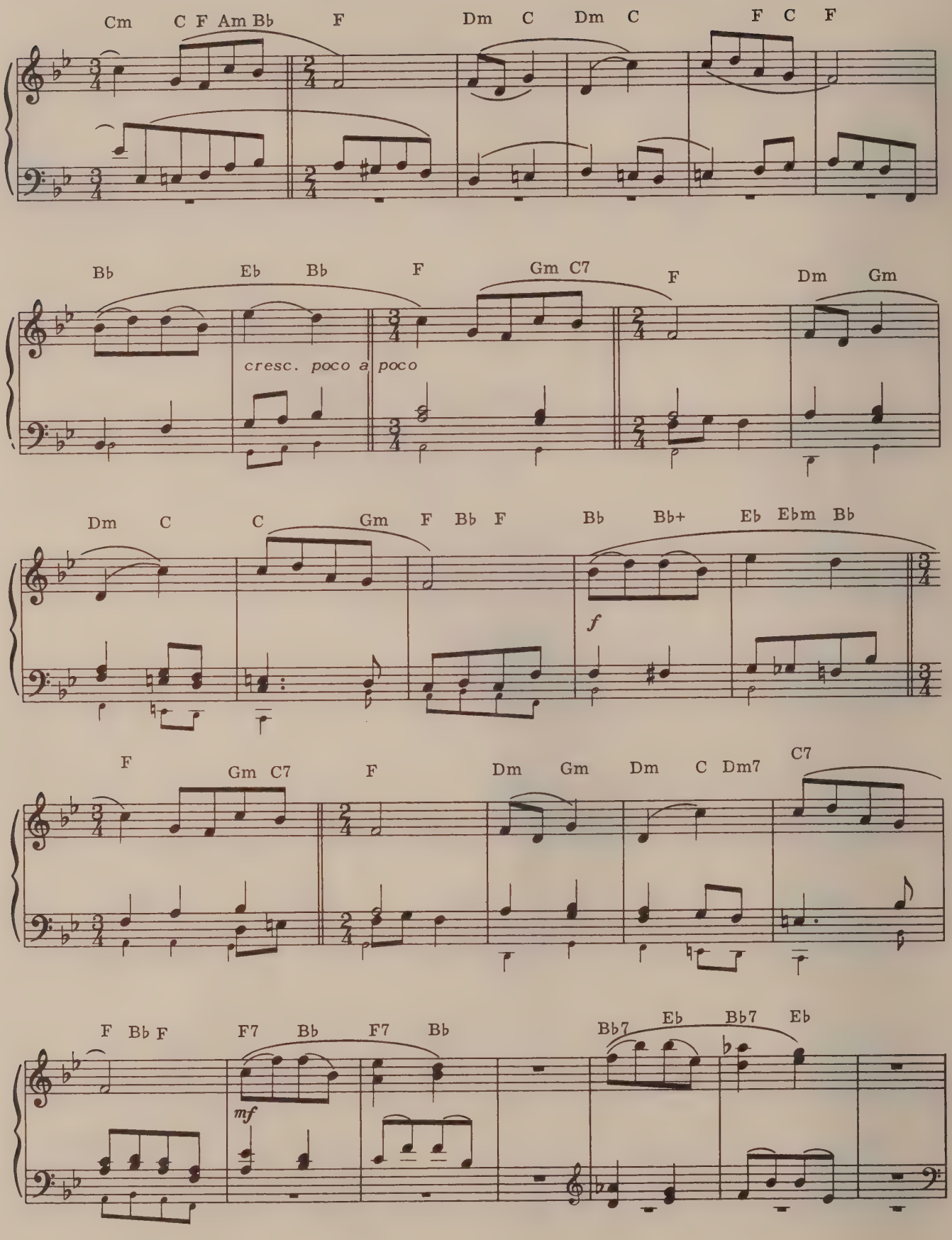
3/4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cresc. poco a poco
Dm C C Gm F B♭ F B♭ B♭+ E♭ E♭m B♭
f
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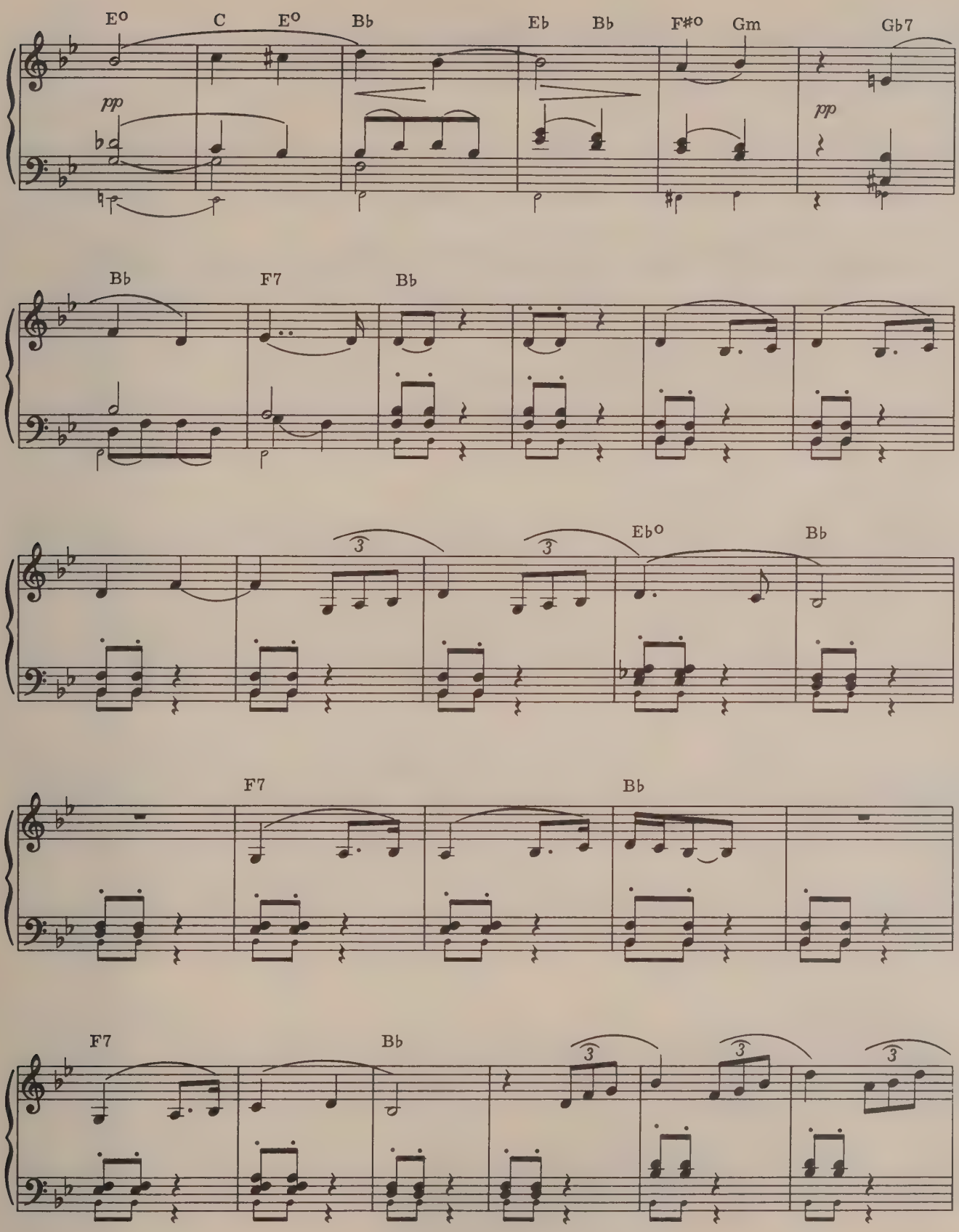
mf


E°
C
E°
B♭
E♭
B♭
F♯°
Gm
G♭7
pp
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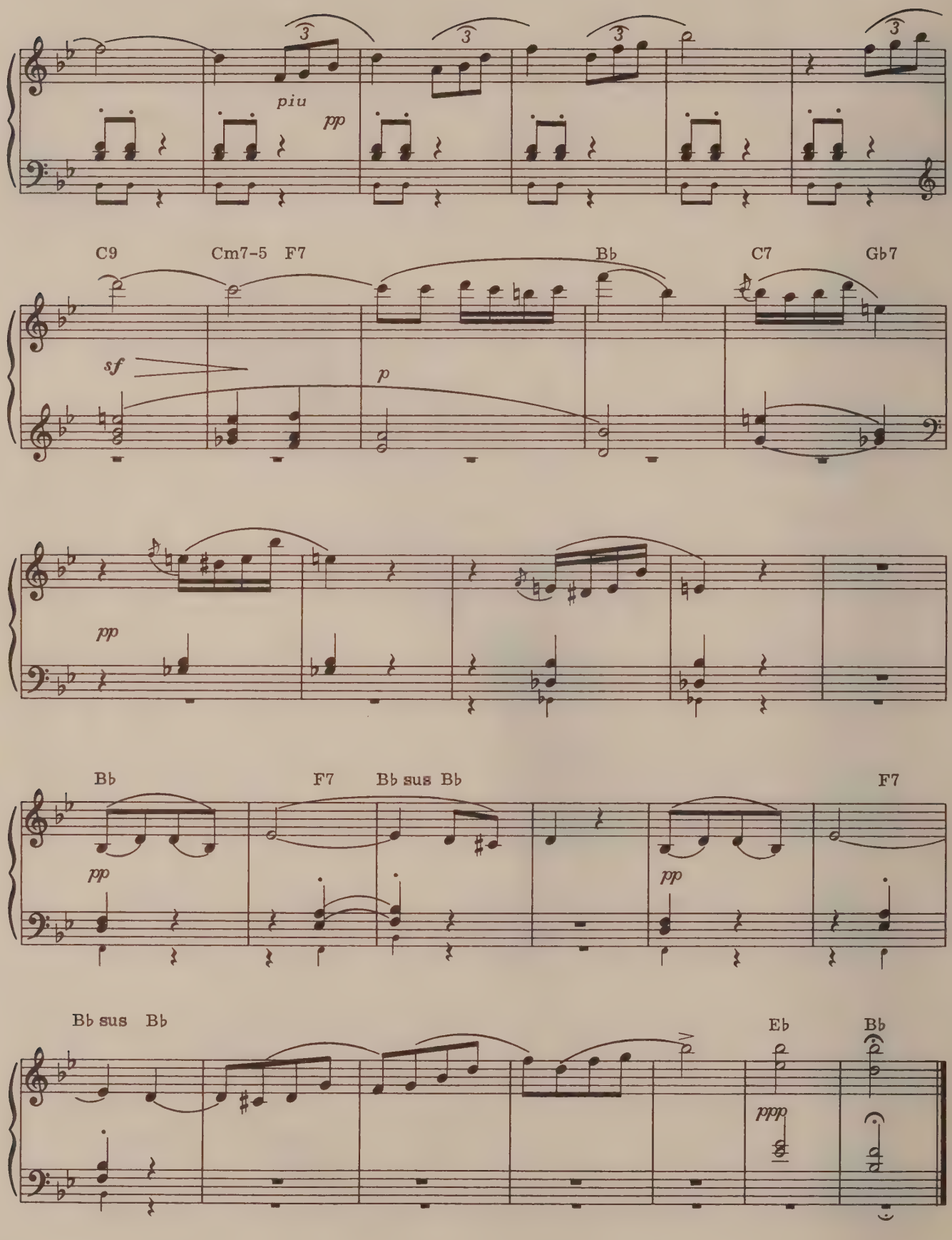
piu
pp
C9
Cm7-5
F7
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C7
G♭7
sf
p
pp
B♭
F7
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pp
pp
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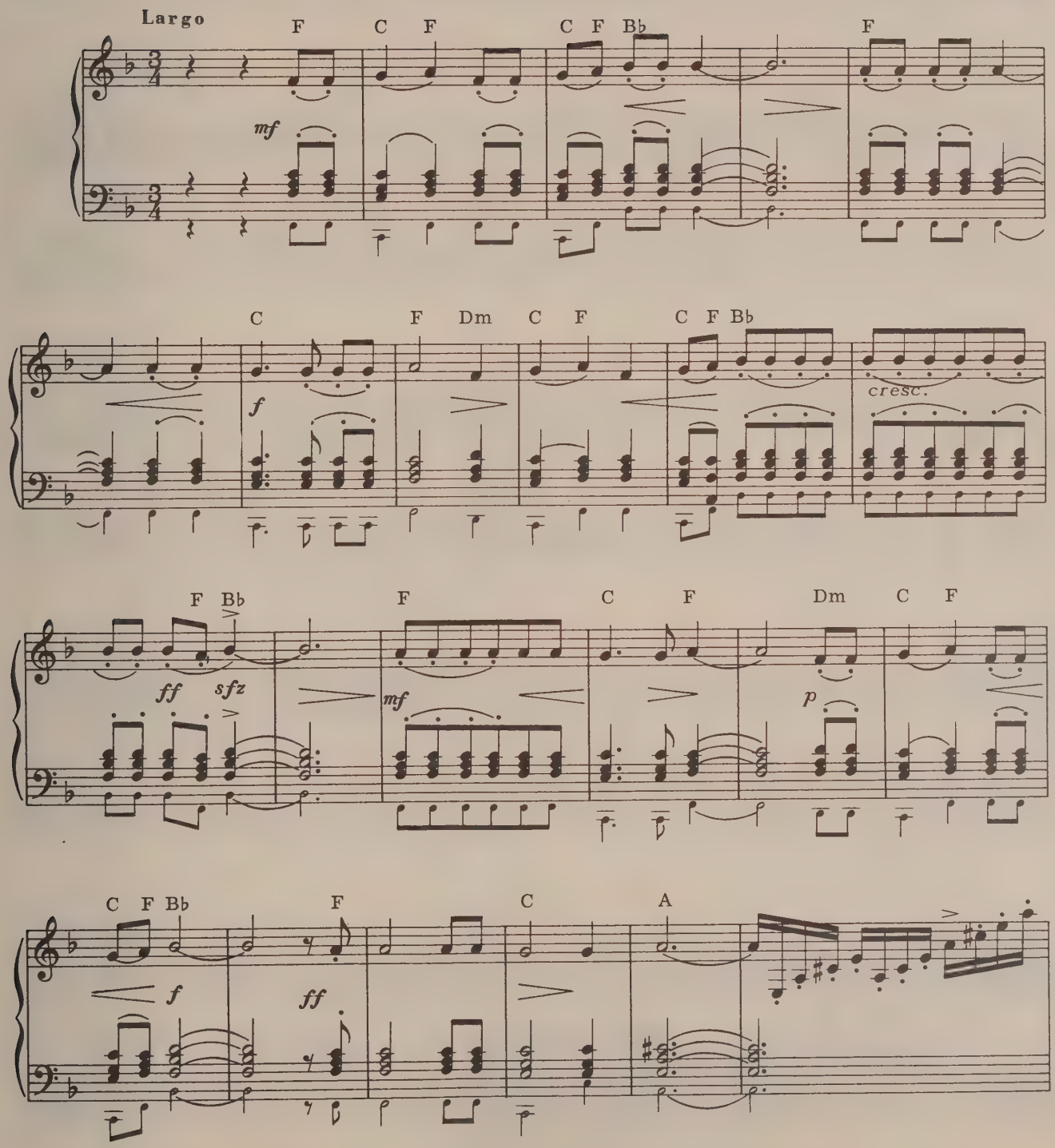
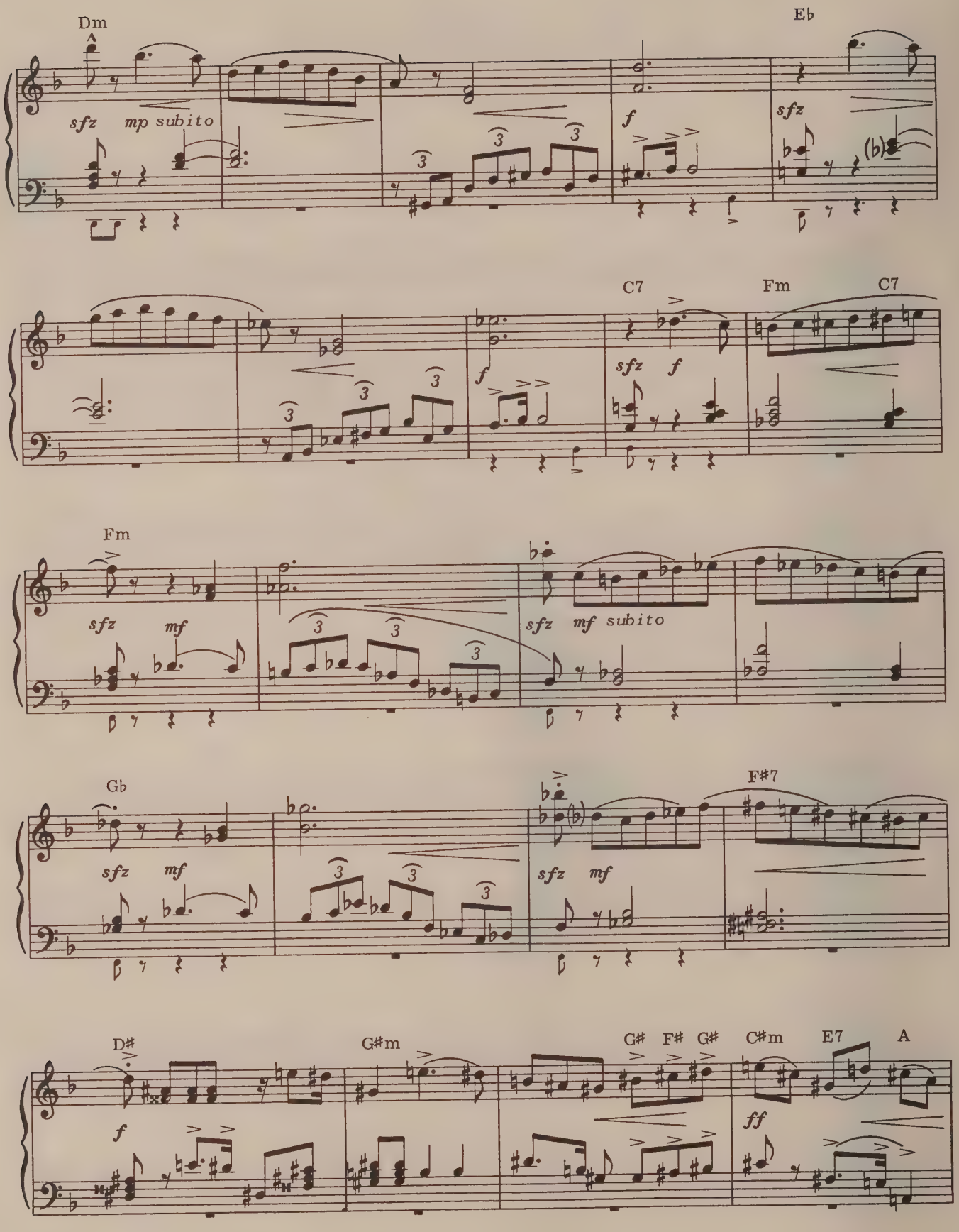
B♭
E♭
B♭
ppp

1812 OVERTURE

P. I. Tchaikovsky

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Eb
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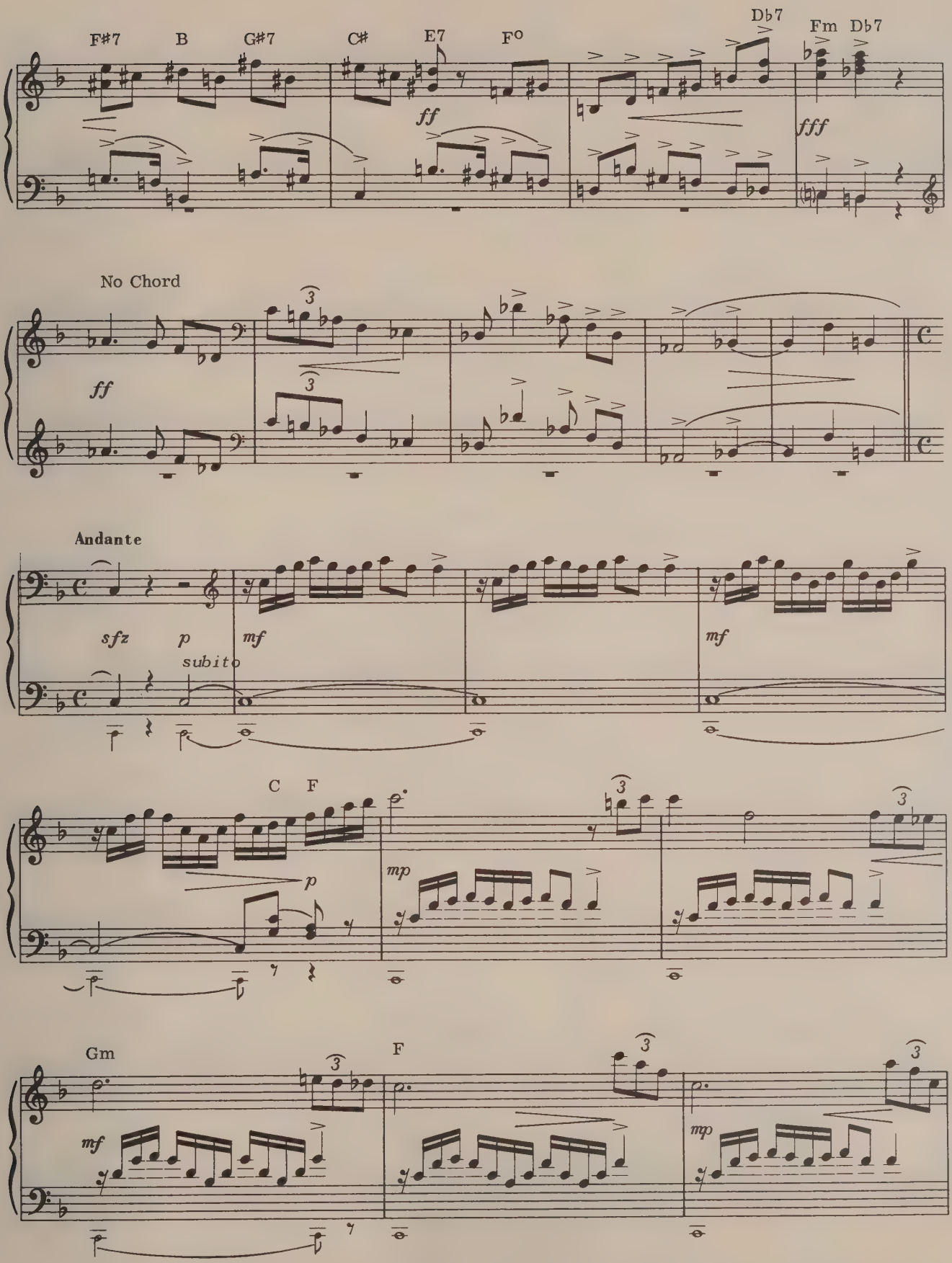
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C#
E7
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mf
mf
C
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Gm
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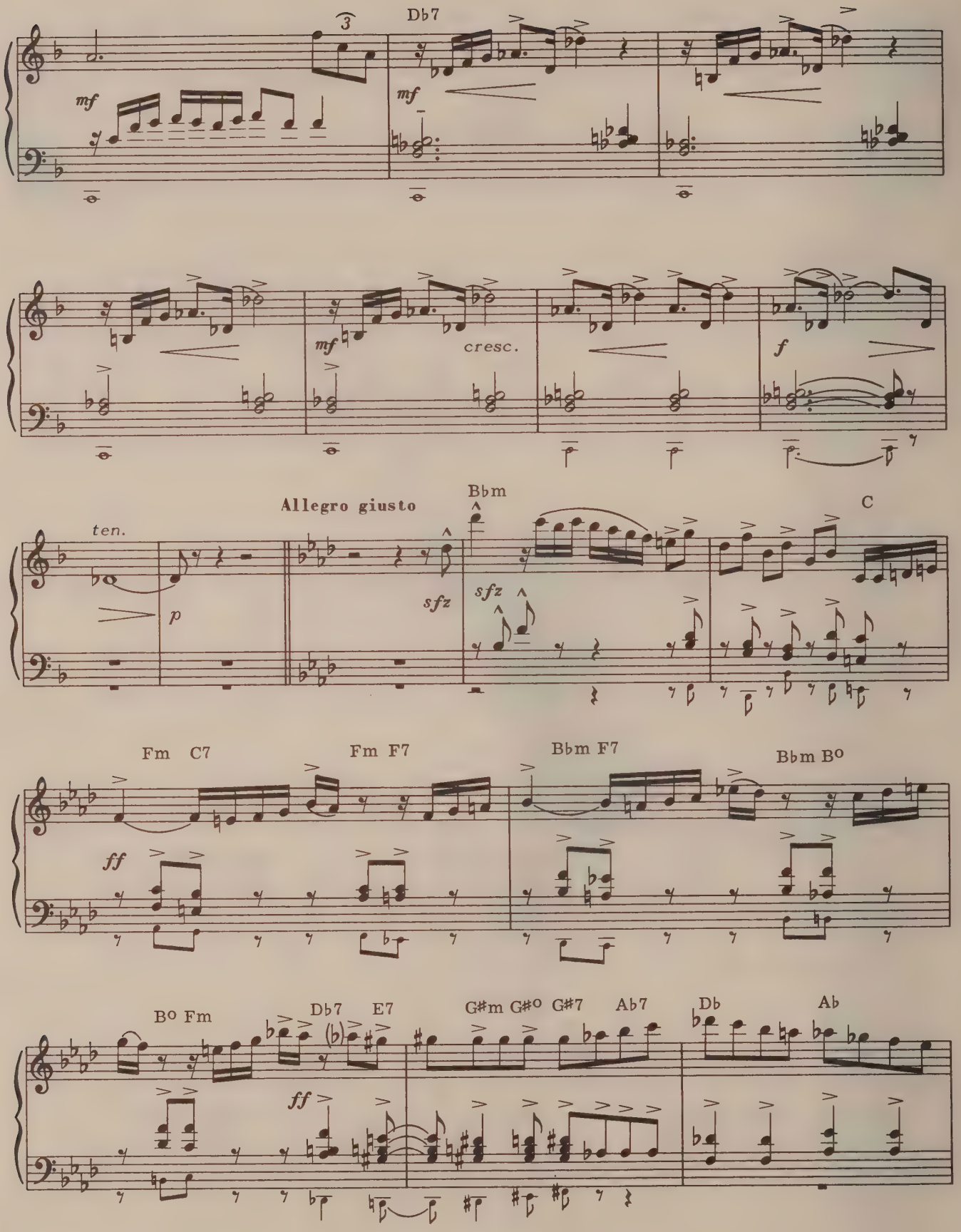
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mf
cresc.
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Bbm
C
ten.
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Bo Fm
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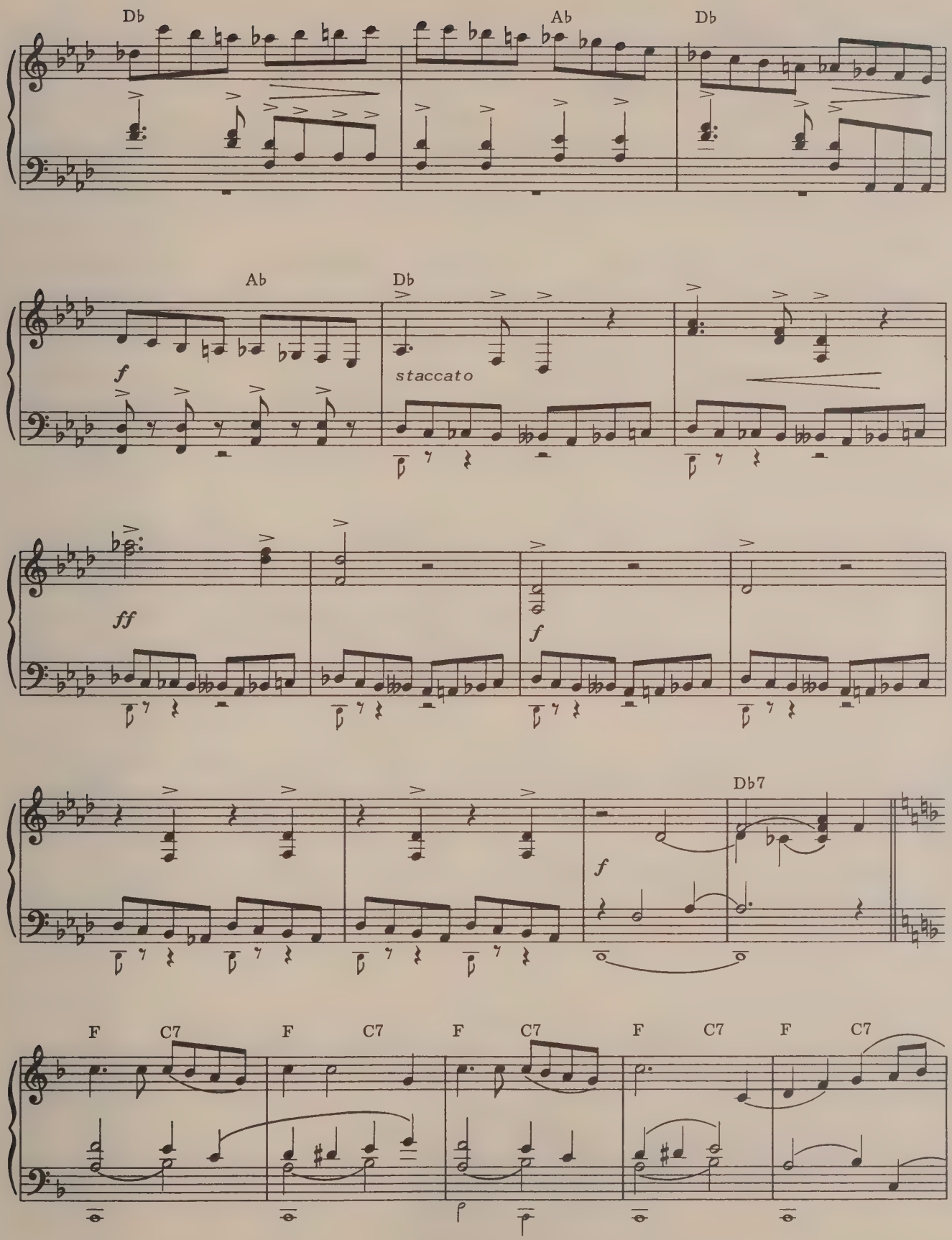
G#m G#o G#7 Ab7
Db
Ab
ff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Db
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C7
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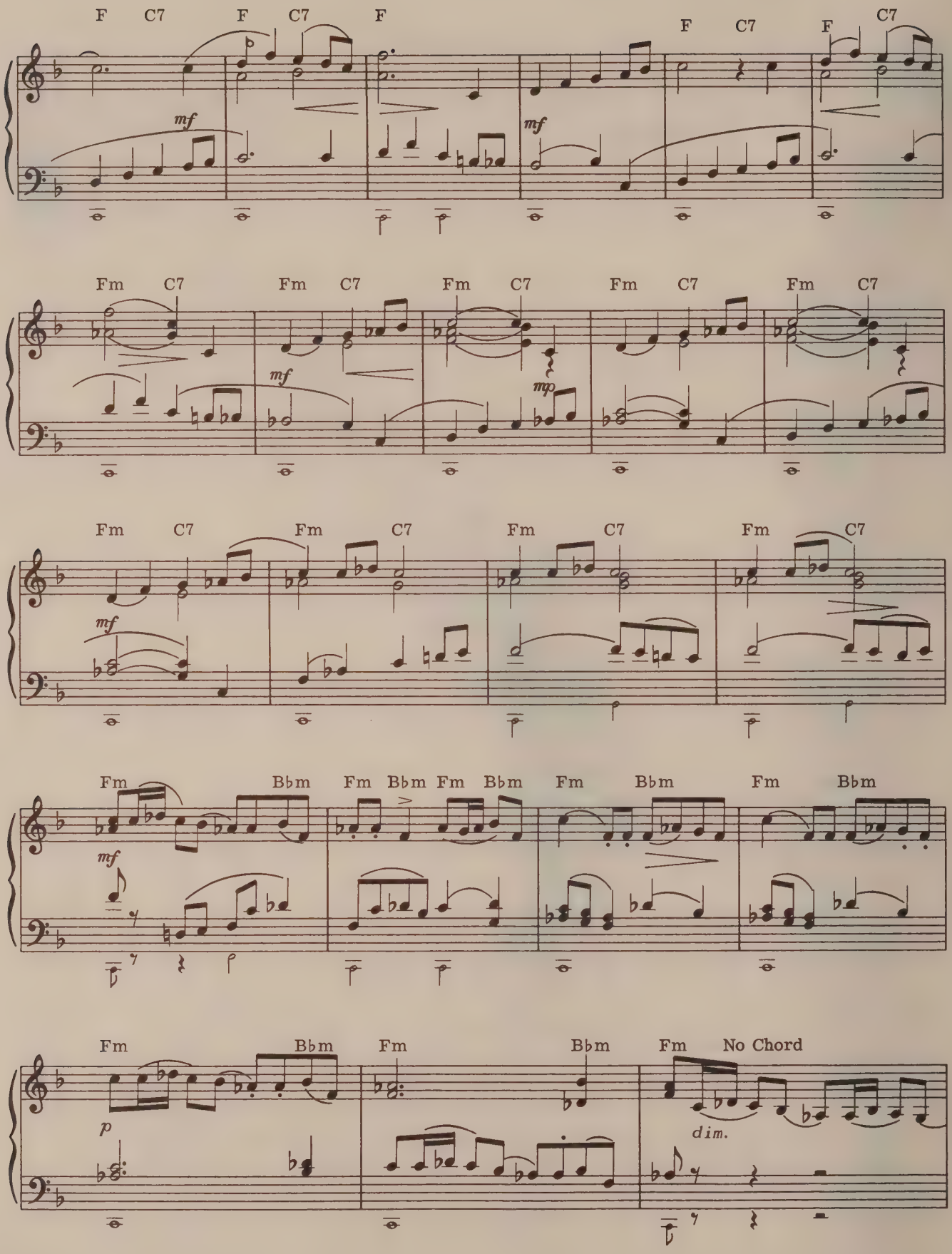
C7
F
C7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mf mp
Fm C7 Fm C7 Fm C7 Fm C7
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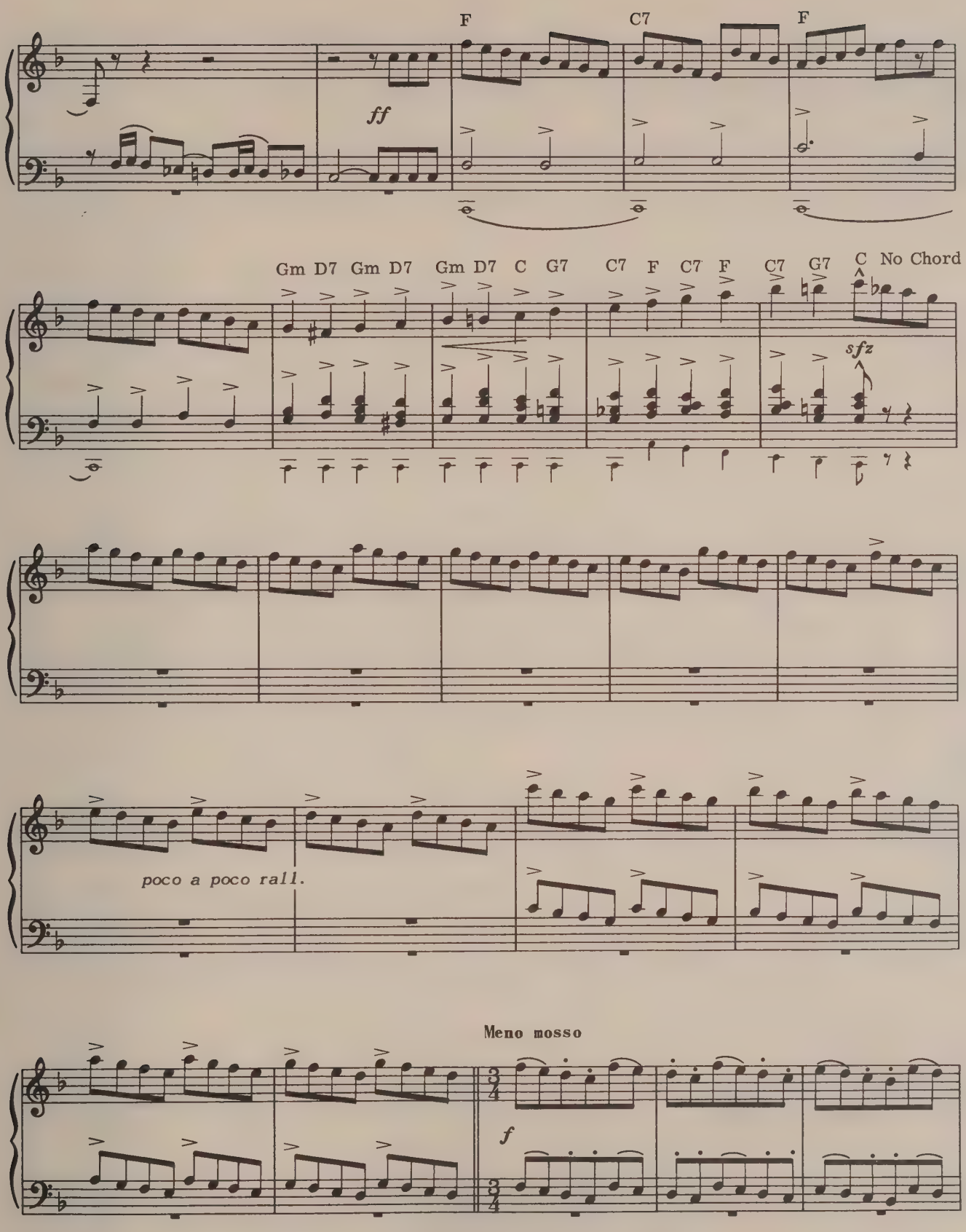
mf
Fm Bbm Fm Bbm Fm No Chord
p dim.


F
C7
F
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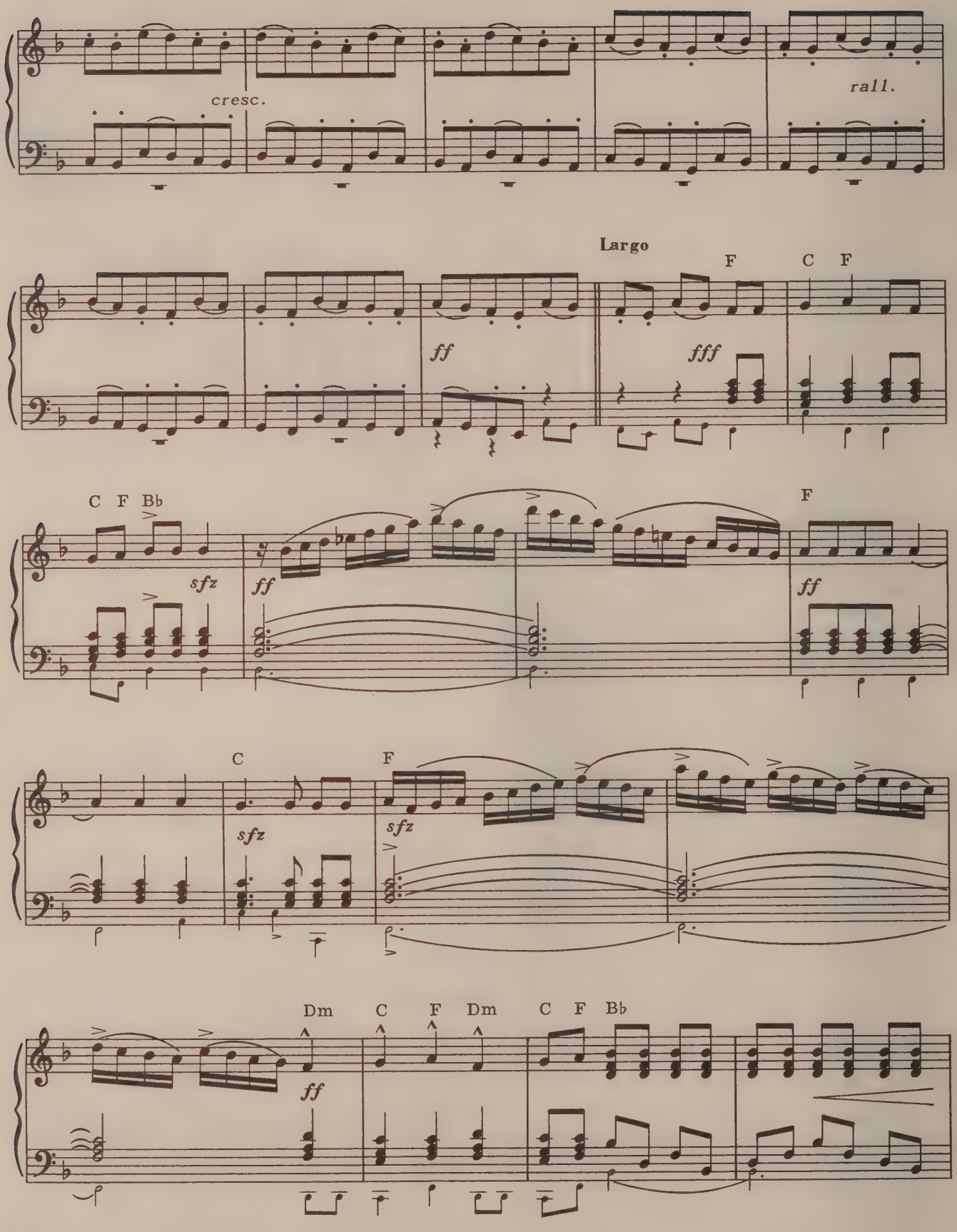
sfz
poco a poco rall.
Meno mosso
f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rall.
Largo
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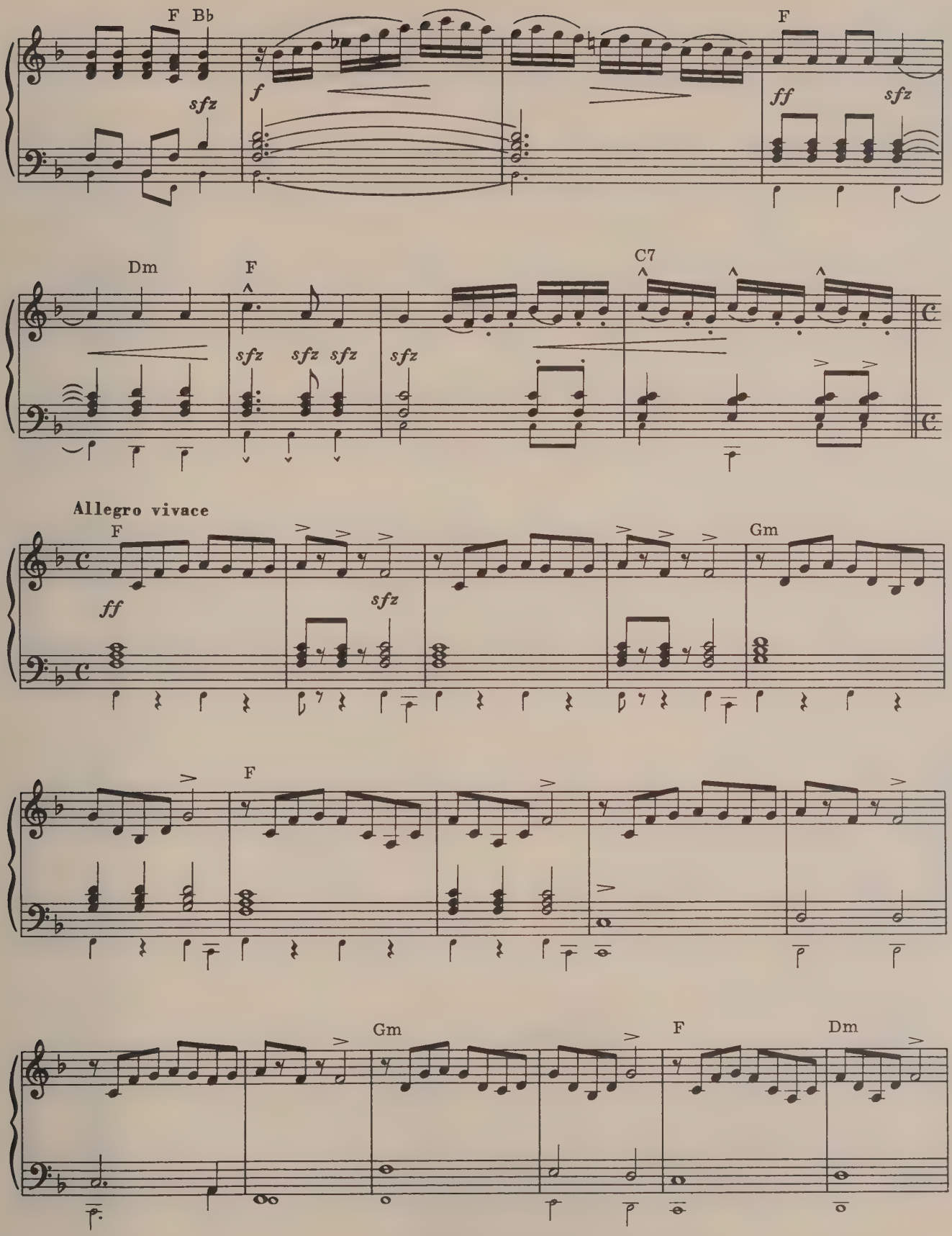
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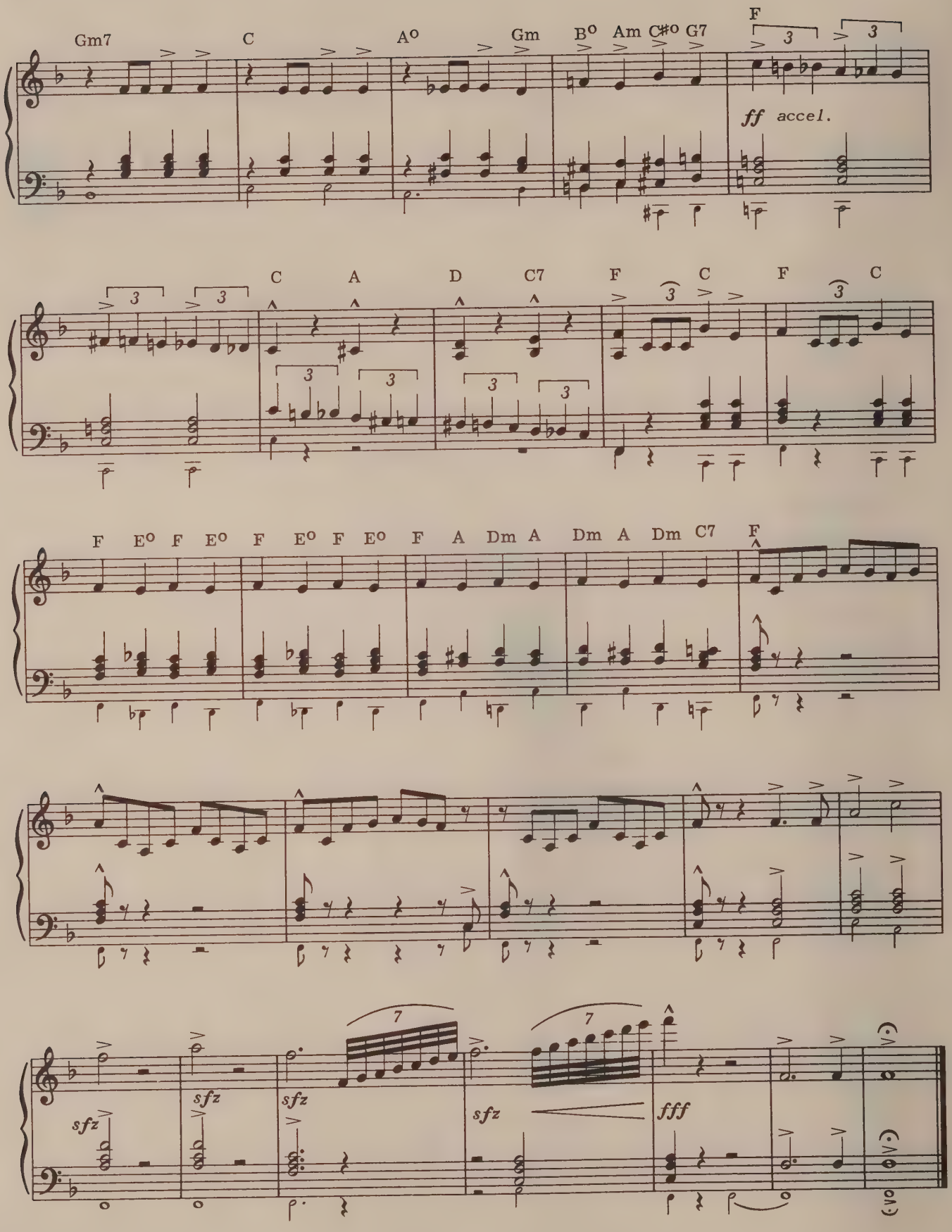
Dm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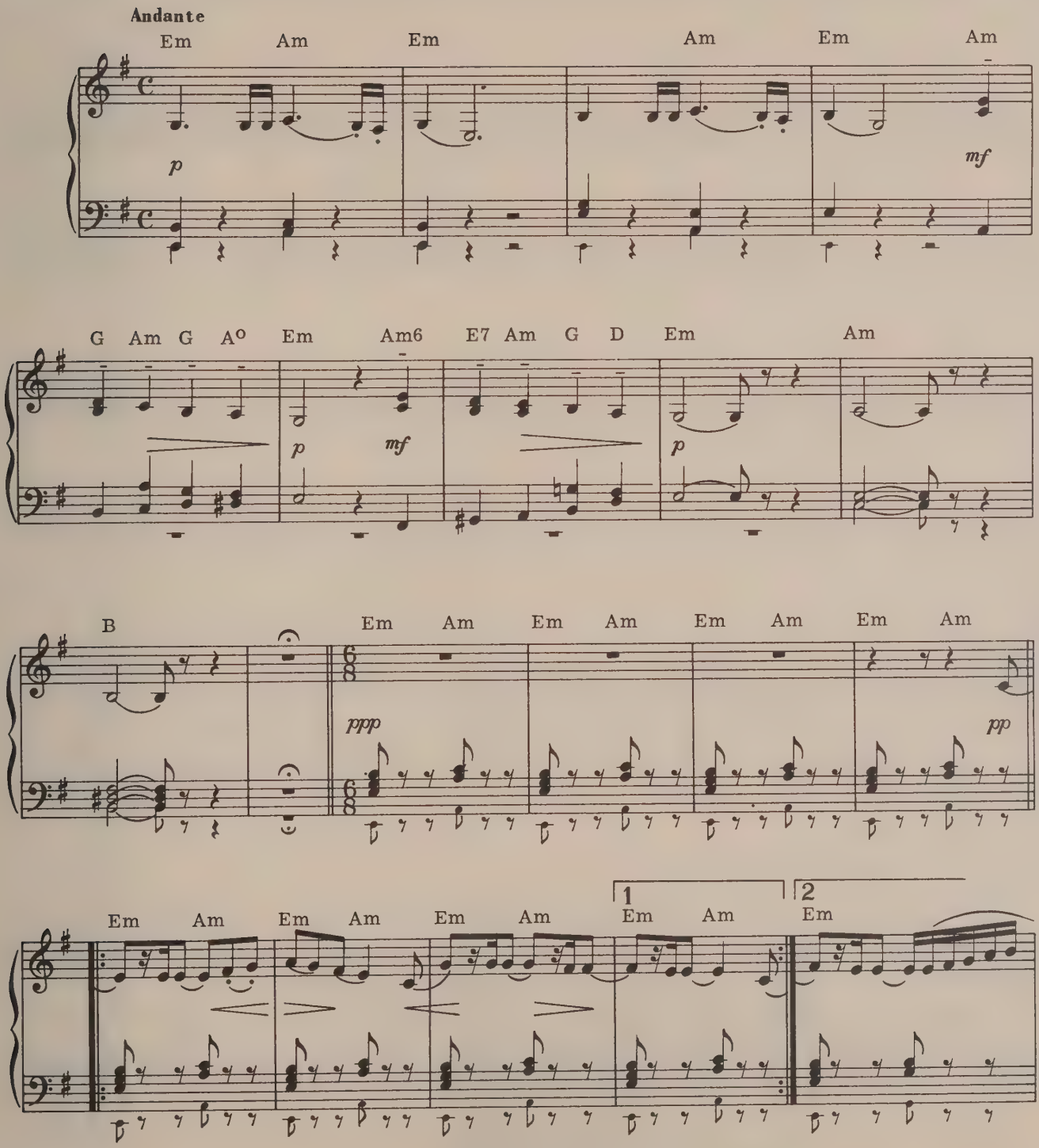
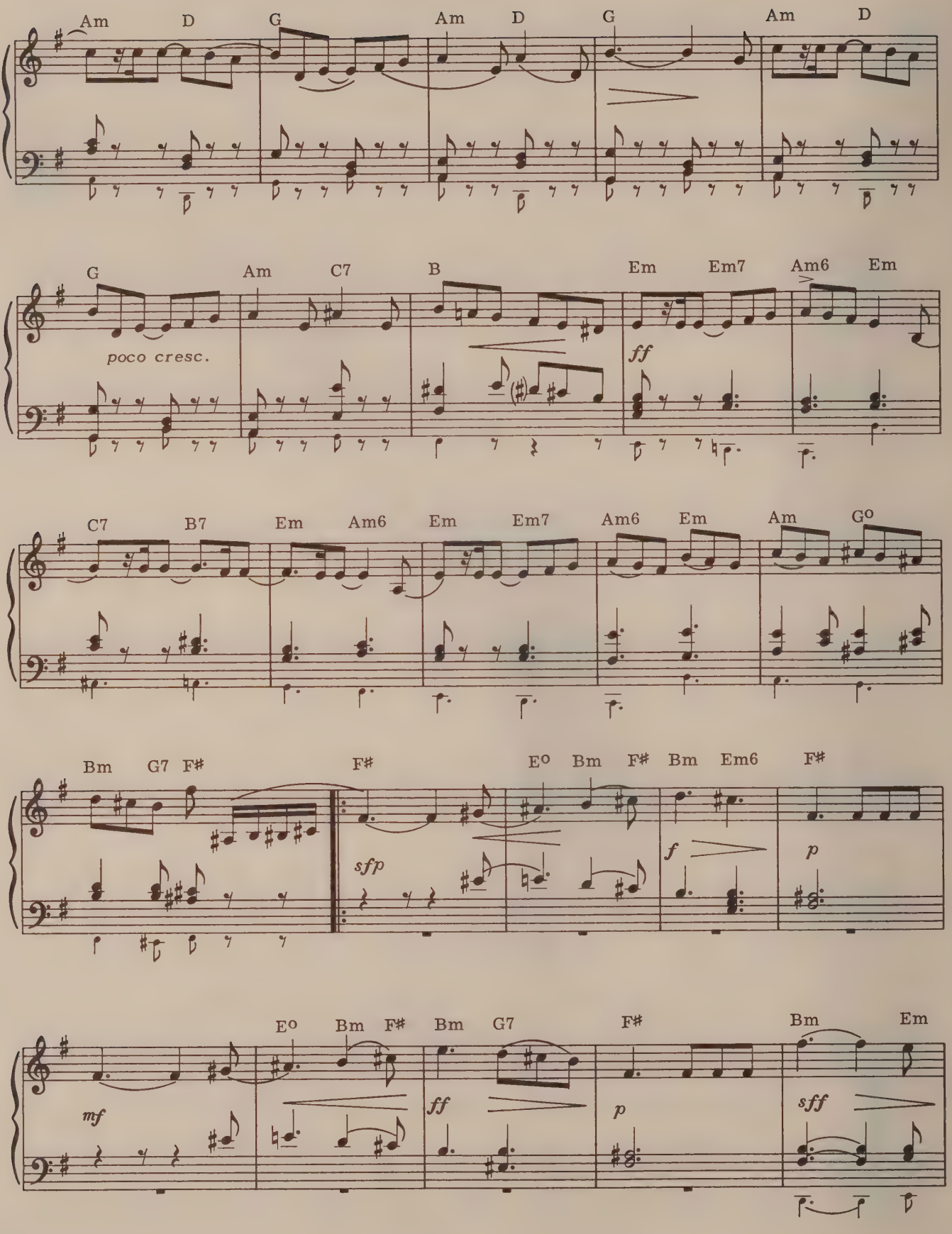
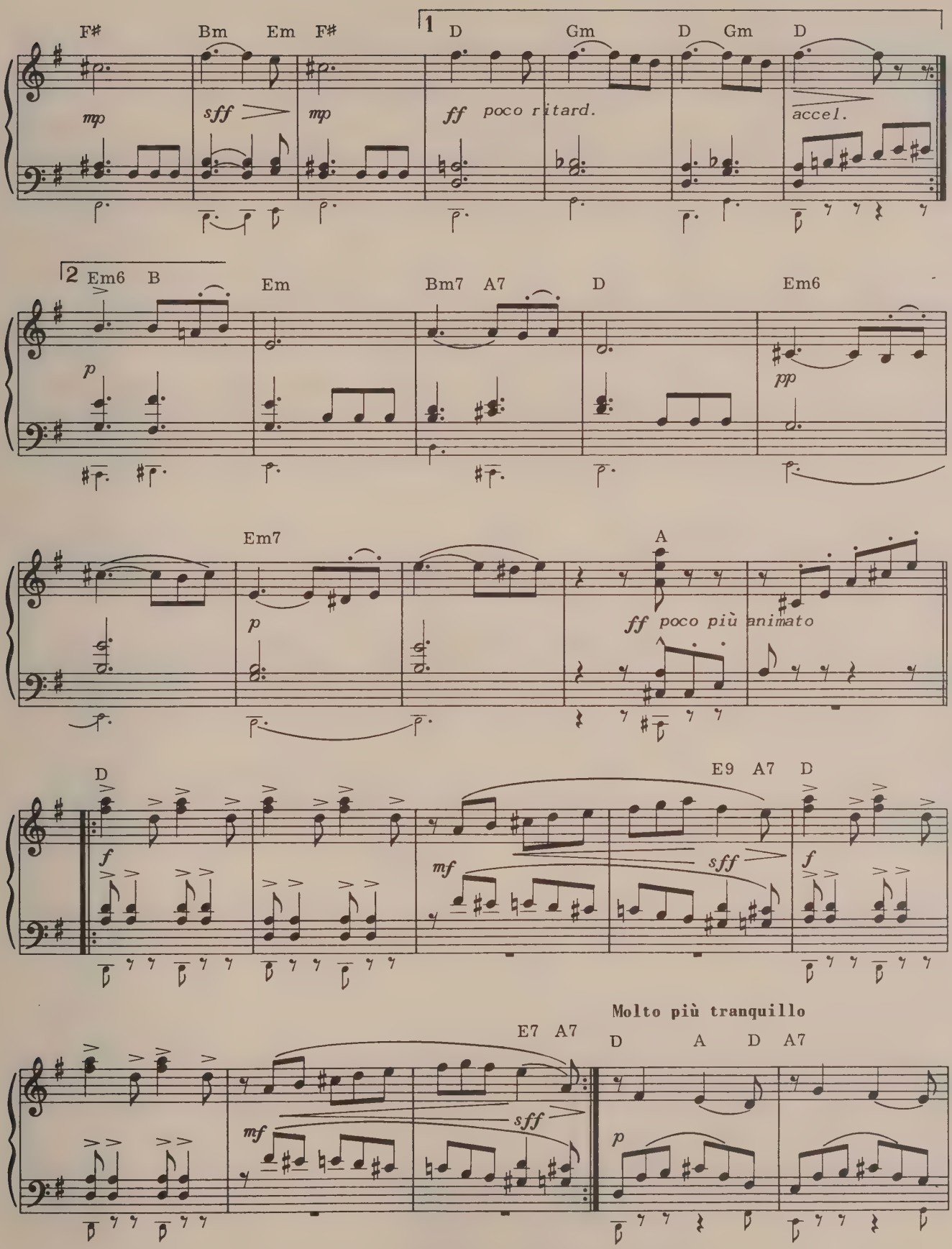
F
E°
F
E°
F
E°
F
E°
F
A
Dm
A
Dm
A
Dm
C7
F
sfz
sfz
sfz
sfz
fff

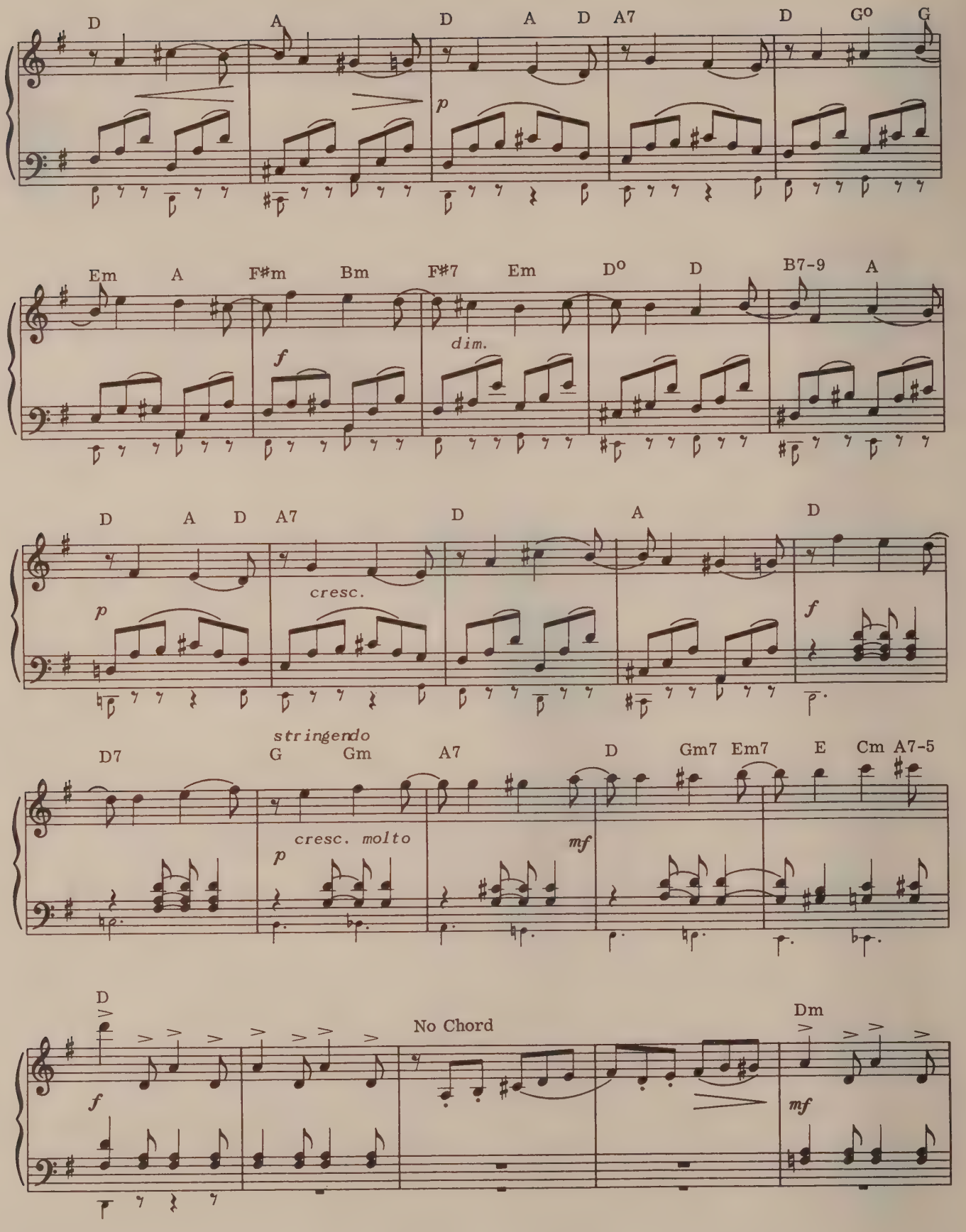
SYMPHONY No. 5 in E minor

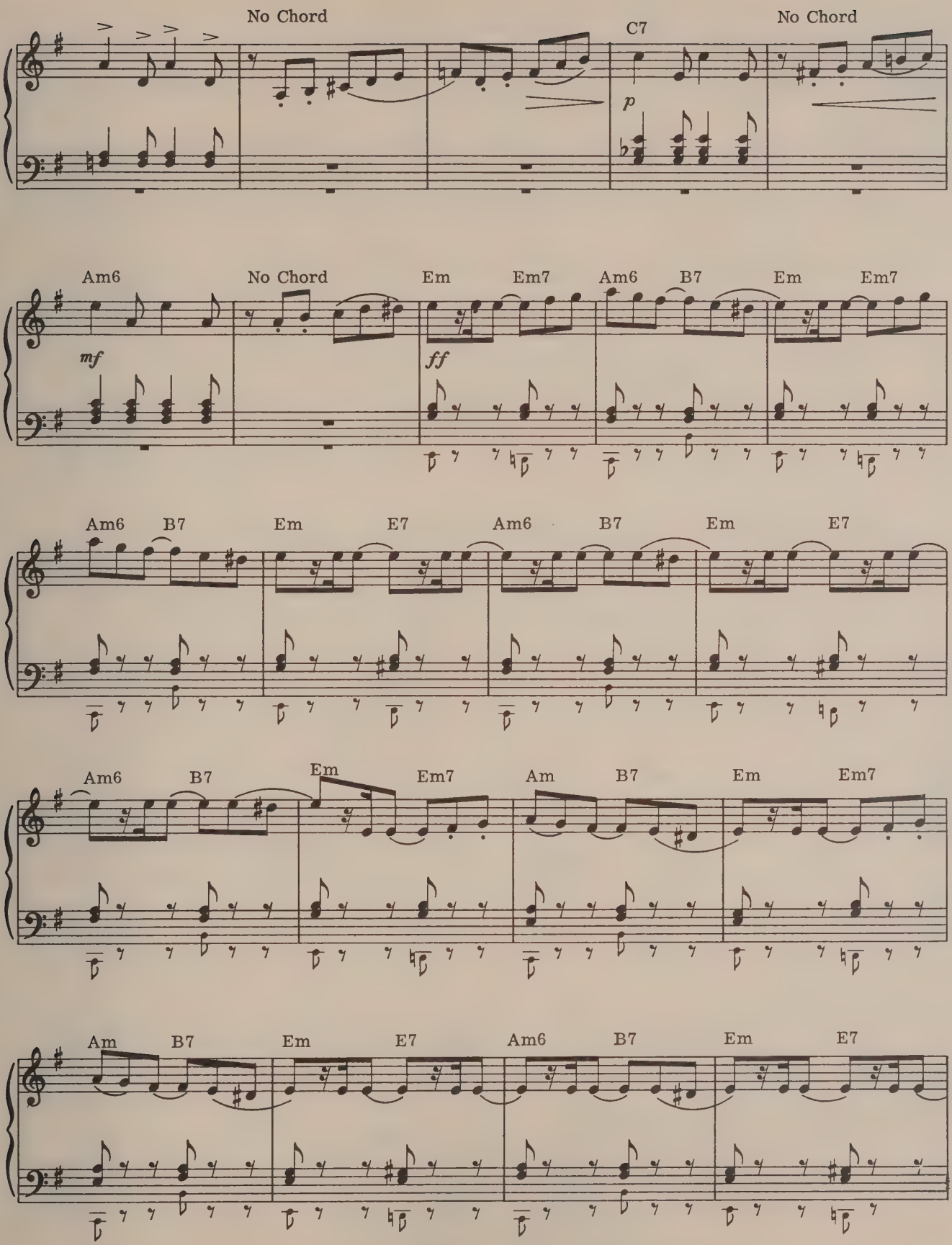
P. I. Tchaikovsky

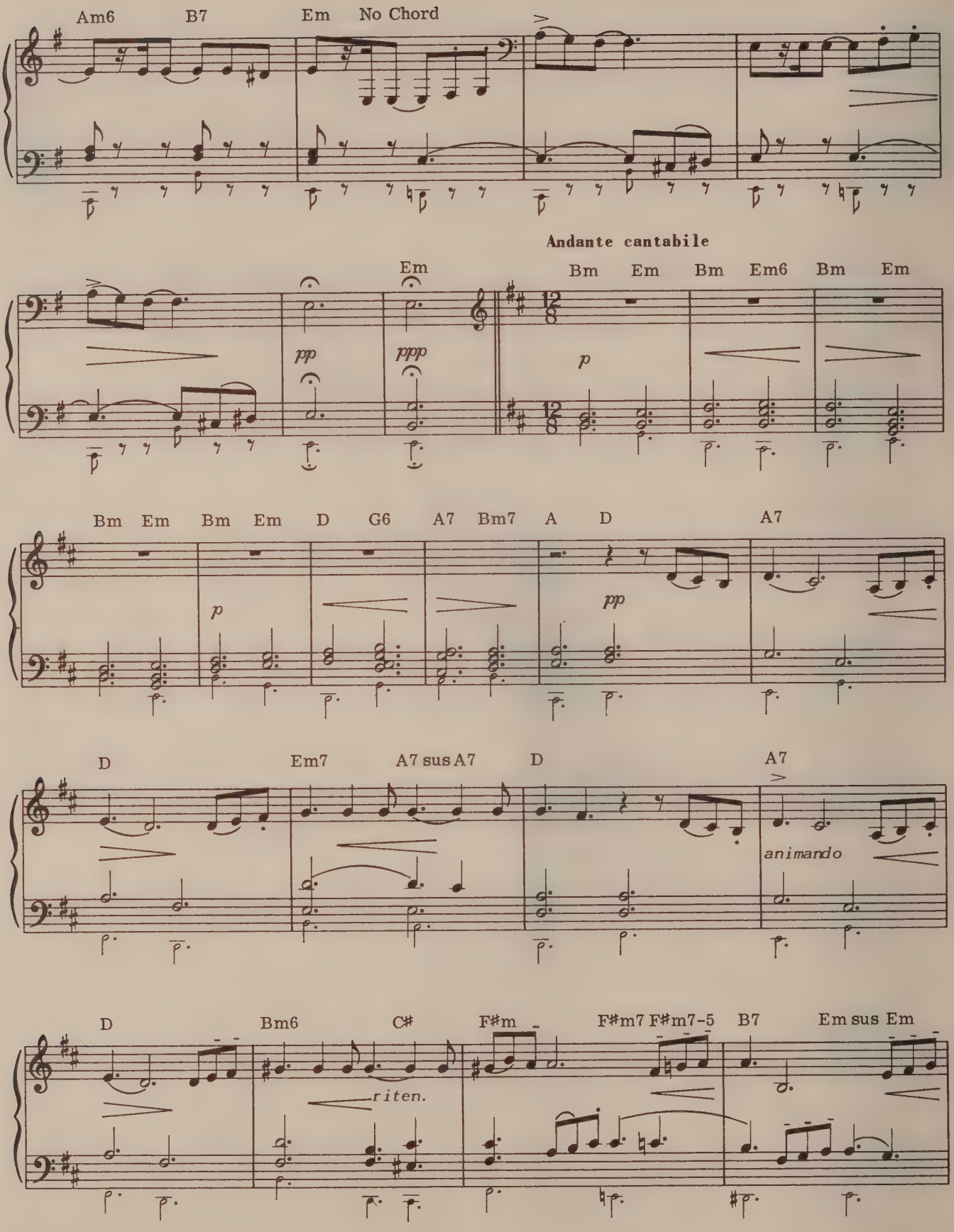


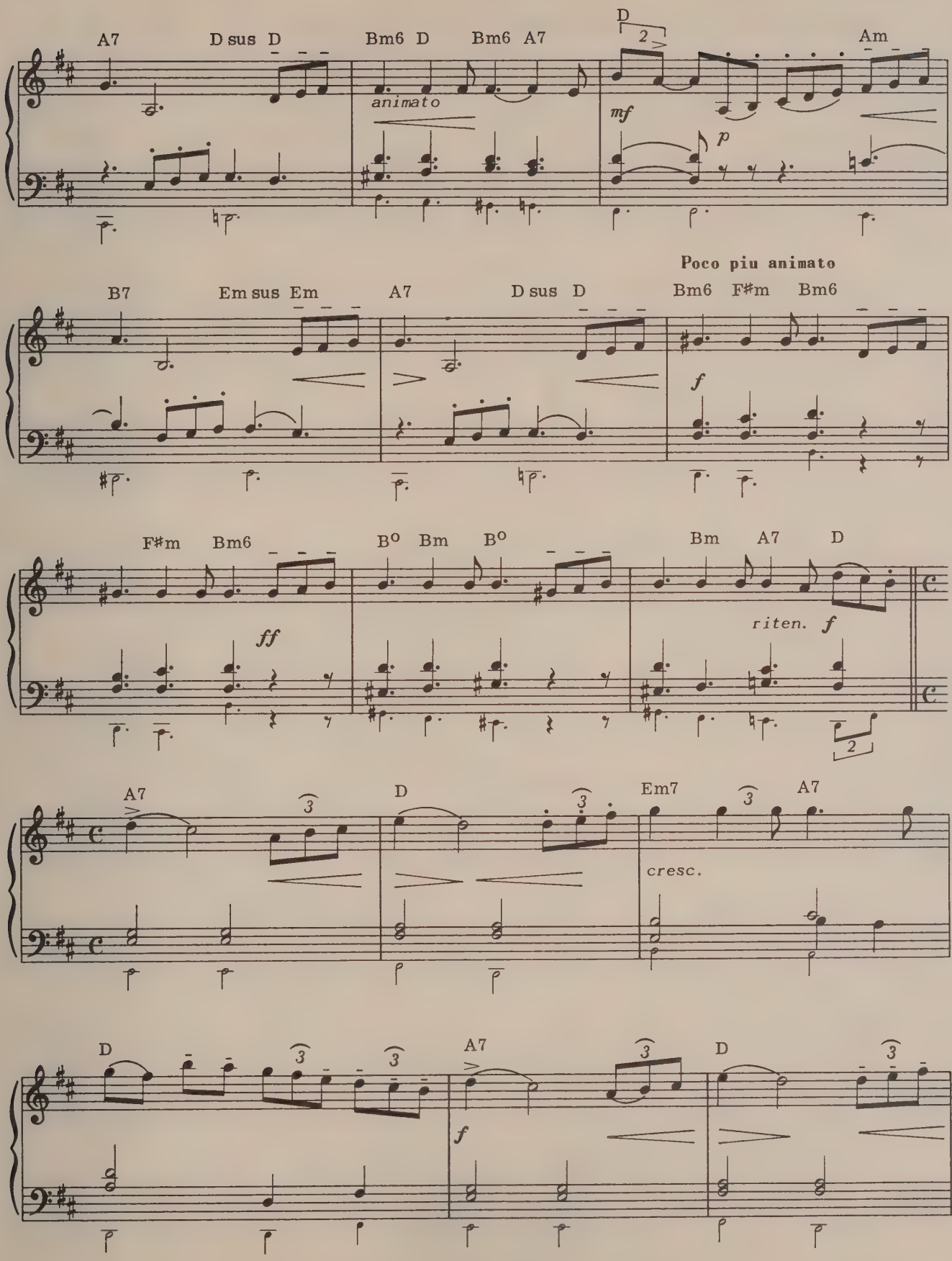

Am D G Am D G Am D
G Am C7 B Em Em7 Am6 Em
poco cresc.
ff
C7 B7 Em Am6 Em Em7 Am6 Em Am G°
Bm G7 F# F# E° Bm F# Bm Em6 F#
sfp
f
p
E° Bm F# Bm G7 F# Bm Em
mf
ff
p
sff

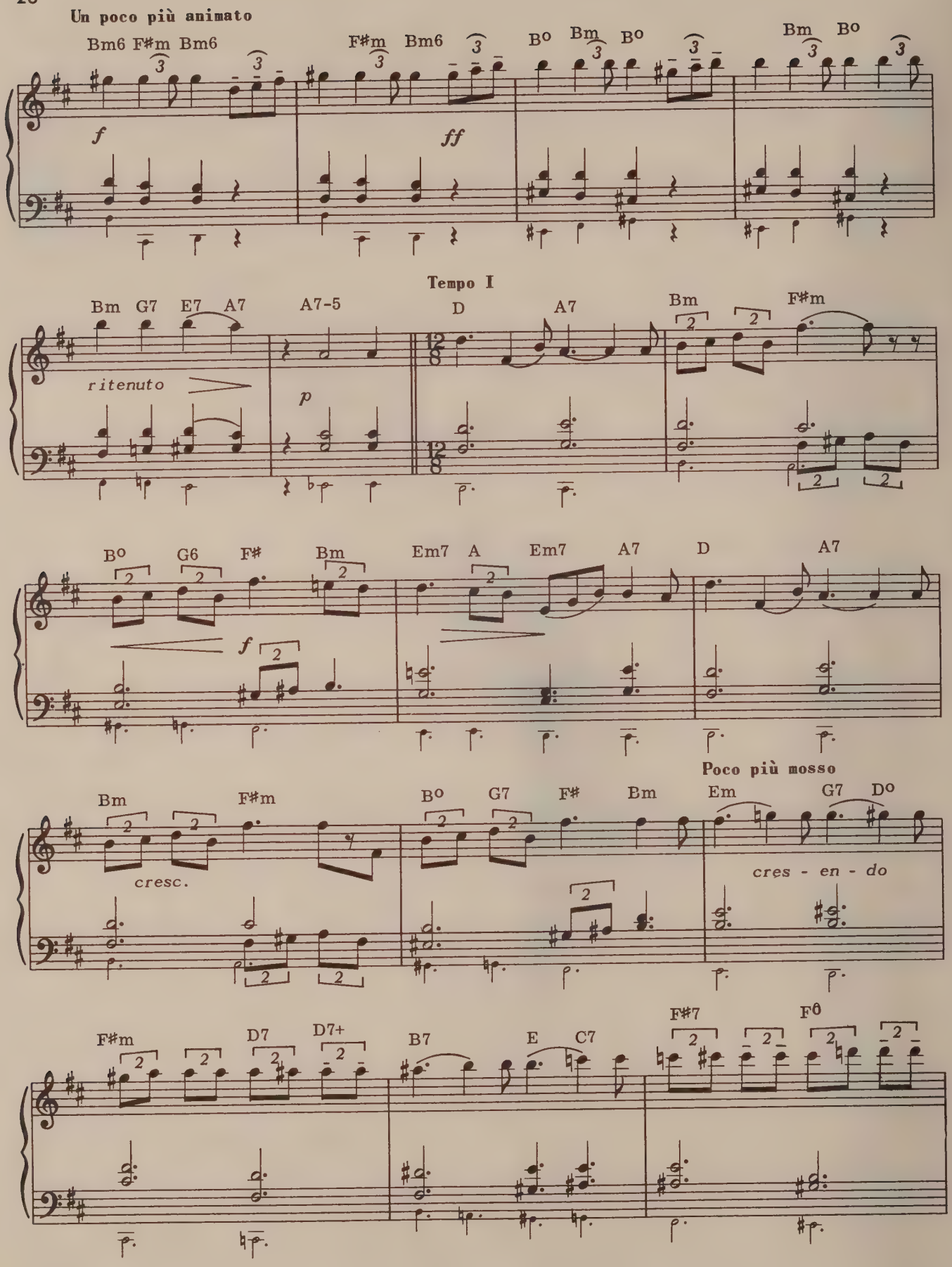

F♯
Bm
Em
F♯
1
D
Gm
D
Gm
D
mp
sff
mp
ff
poco ritard.
accel.
2
Em6
B
Em
Bm7
A7
D
Em6
p
pp
Em7
A
p
ff
poco più animato
D
E9
A7
D
f
mf
sff
f
Molto più tranquillo
E7
A7
D
A
D
A7
mf
sff
p

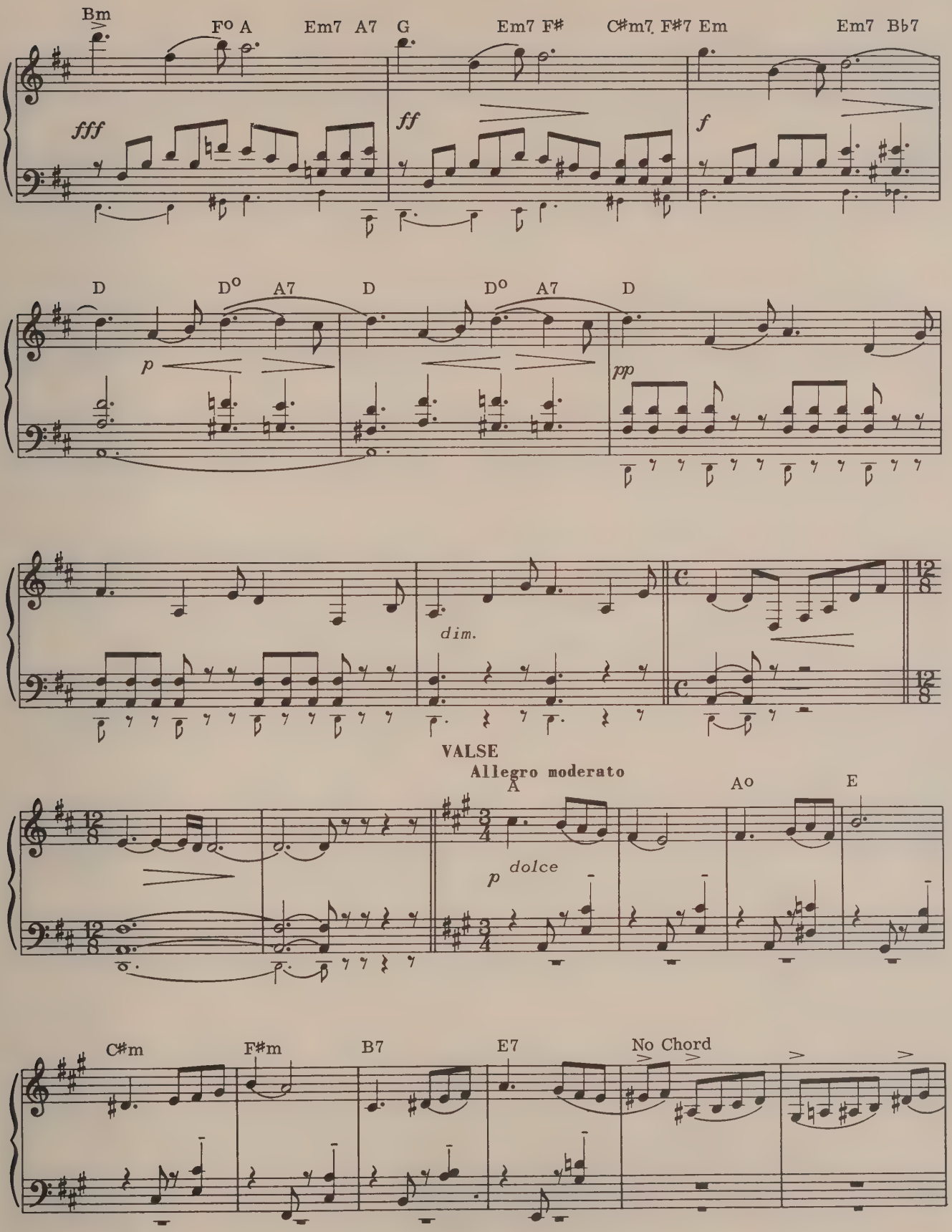

D
A
D
A
D
A7
D
Go
G
p
Em
A
F#m
Bm
F#7
Em
Do
D
B7-9
A
f
dim.
D
A
D
A7
D
A
D
p
cresc.
f
stringendo
D7
G
Gm
A7
D
Gm7
Em7
E
Cm
A7-5
cresc. molto
p
mf
D
No Chord
Dm
f
mf

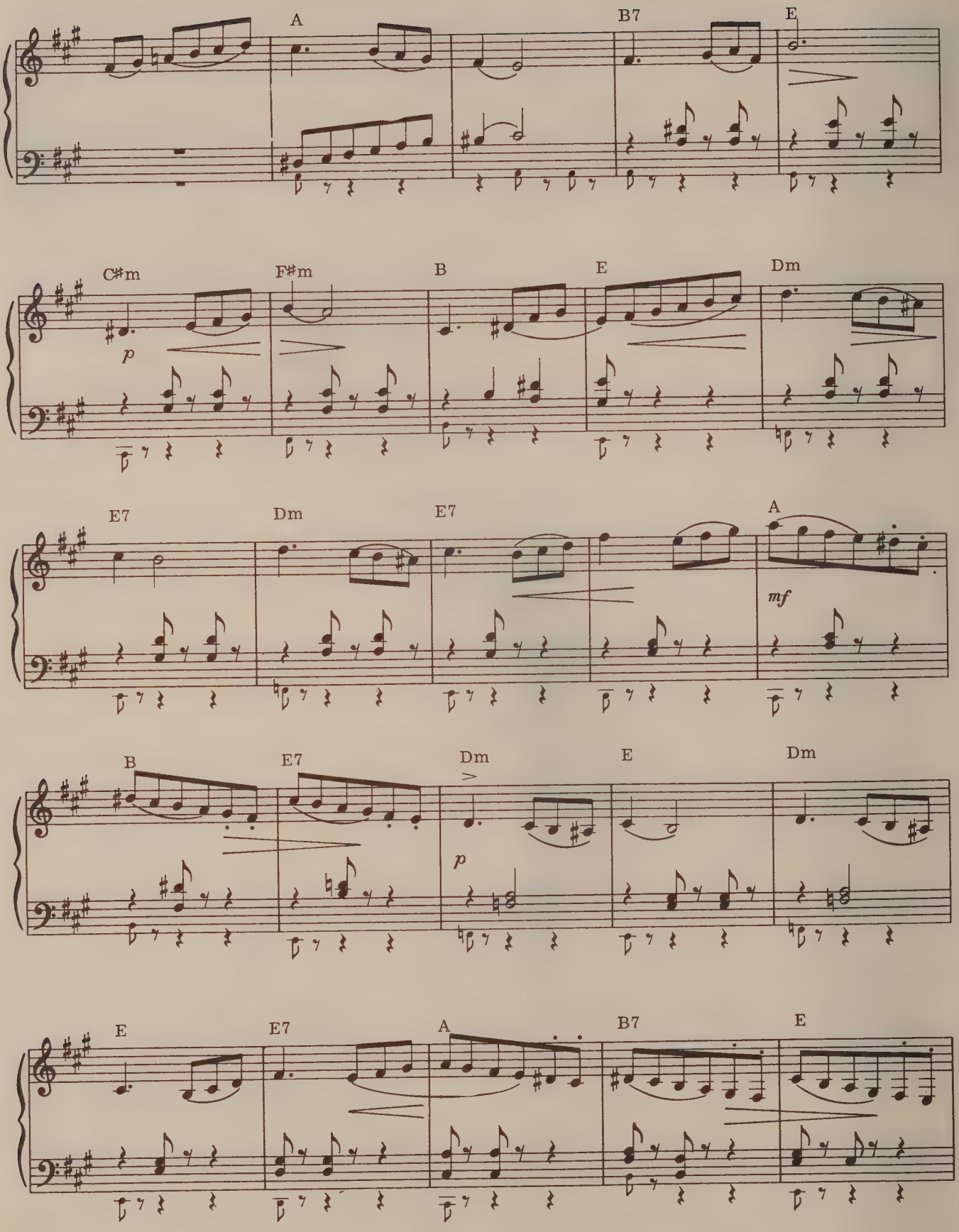

No Chord
C7
No Chord
p
Am6
No Chord
Em
Em7
Am6
B7
Em
Em7
mf
ff
Am6
B7
Em
E7
Am6
B7
Em
E7
Am6
B7
Em
Em7
Am
B7
Em
Em7
Am
B7
Em
E7
Am6
B7
Em
E7

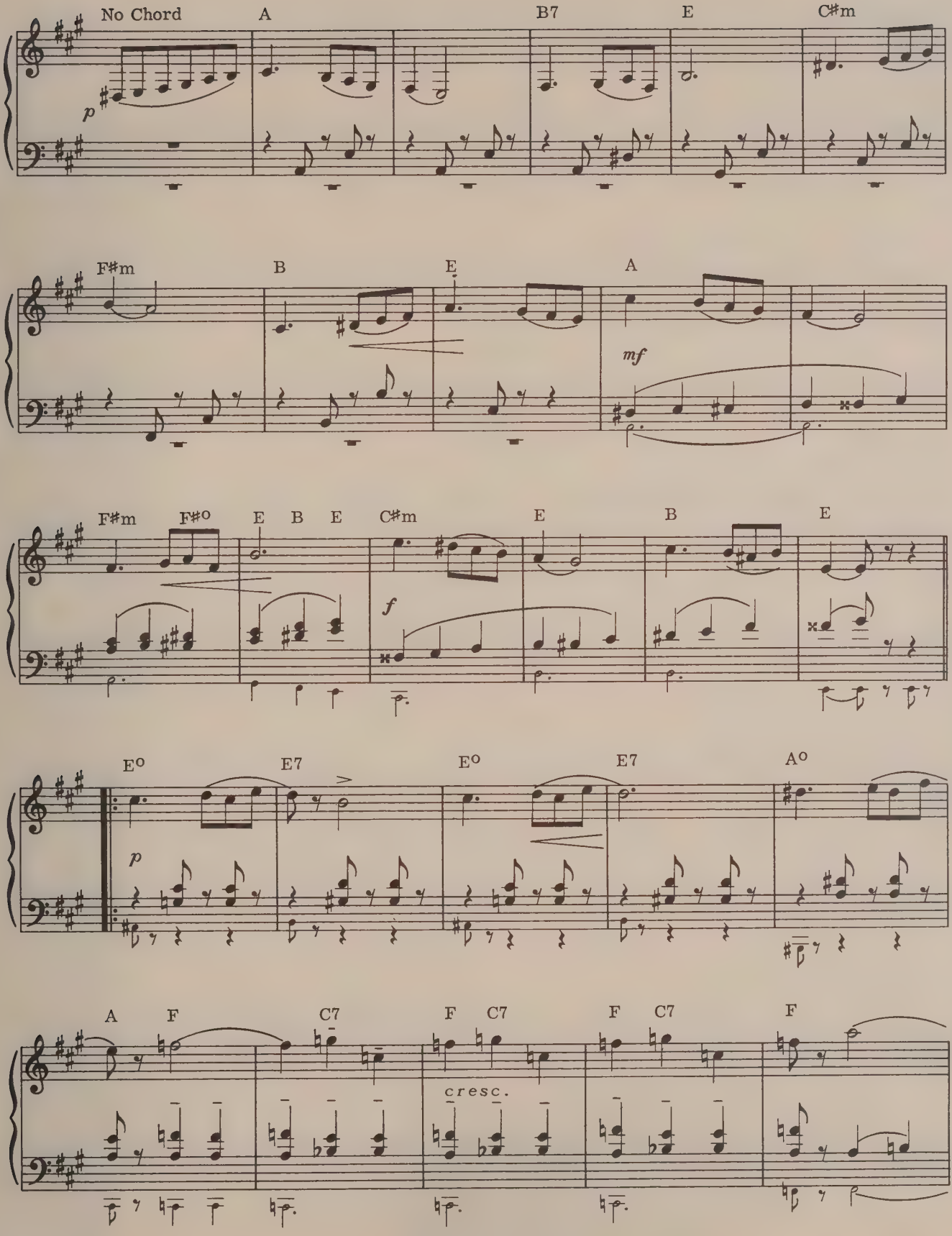
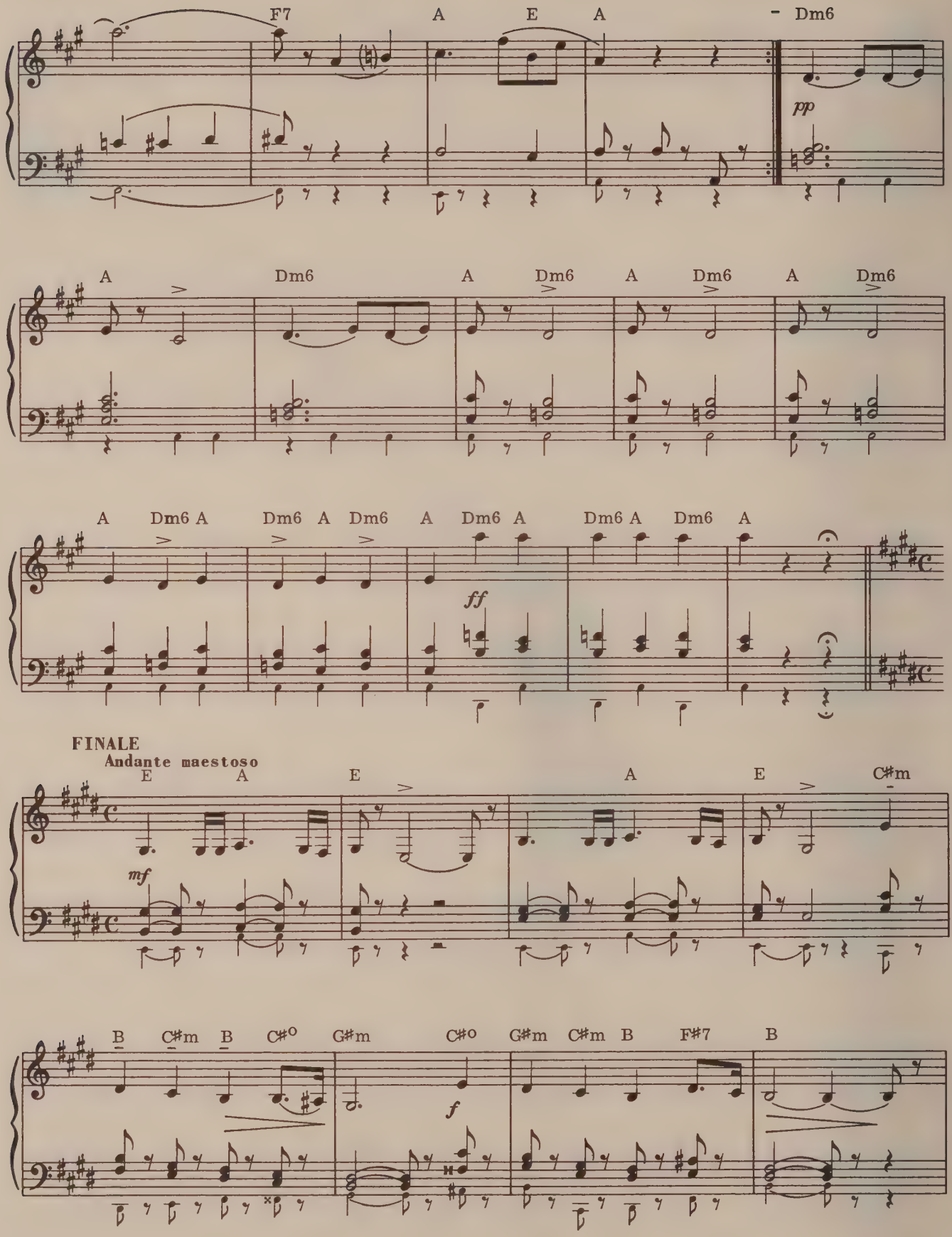

Am6
B7
Em
No Chord
Andante cantabile
Em
Bm
Em
Bm
Em6
Bm
Em
pp
ppp
p
Bm
Em
Bm
Em
D
G6
A7
Bm7
A
D
A7
p
pp
D
Em7
A7 sus A7
D
A7
animando
D
Bm6
C♯
F♯m
F♯m7
F♯m7-5
B7
Em sus Em
riten.

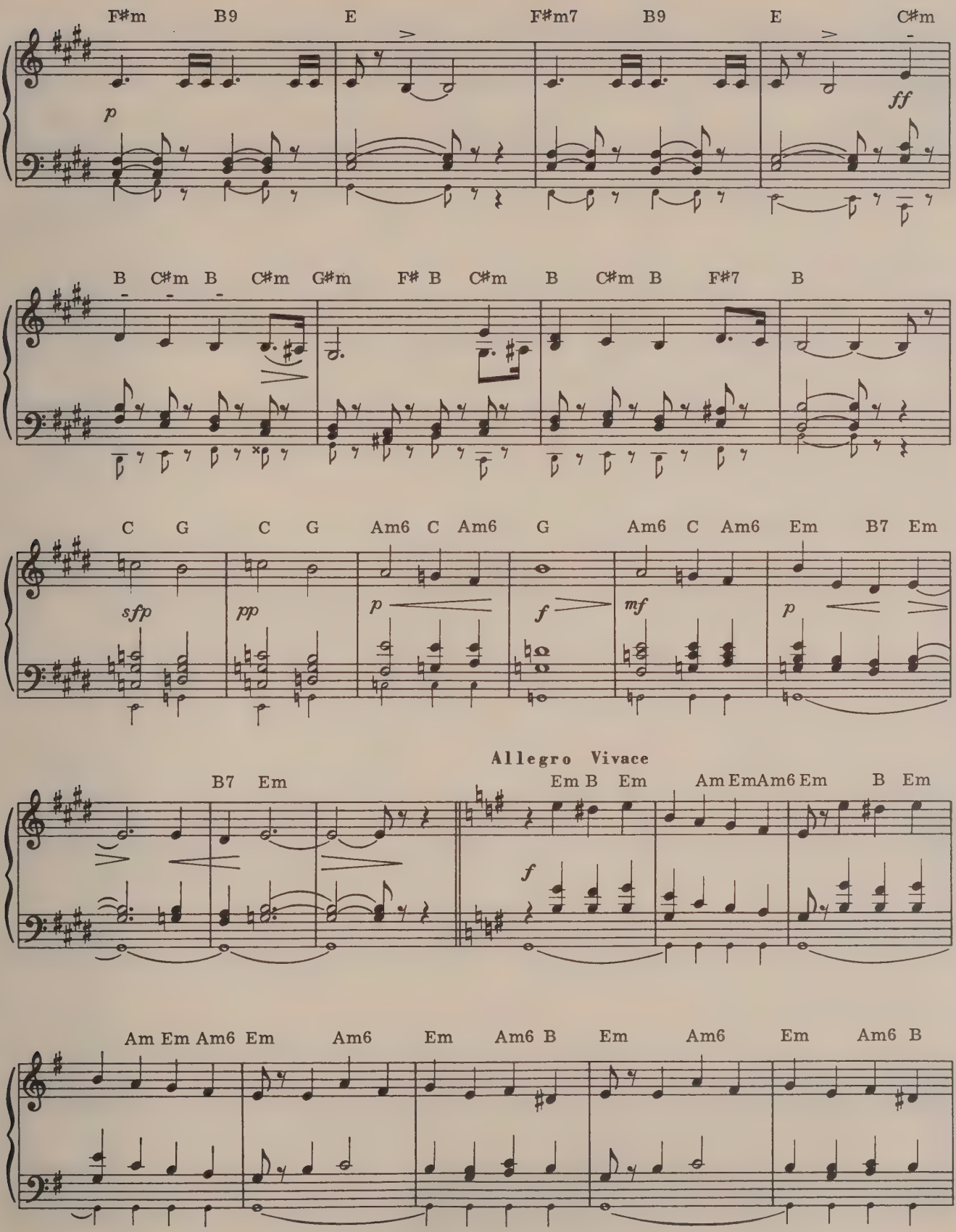

A7
D sus D
Bm6 D
Bm6 A7
D
Am
animato
mf
p
Poco piu animato
B7
Em sus Em
A7
D sus D
Bm6 F#m Bm6
f
F#m Bm6
Bo Bm Bo
Bm A7 D
ff
riten. f
A7
D
Em7 A7
cresc.
D
A7
D
f

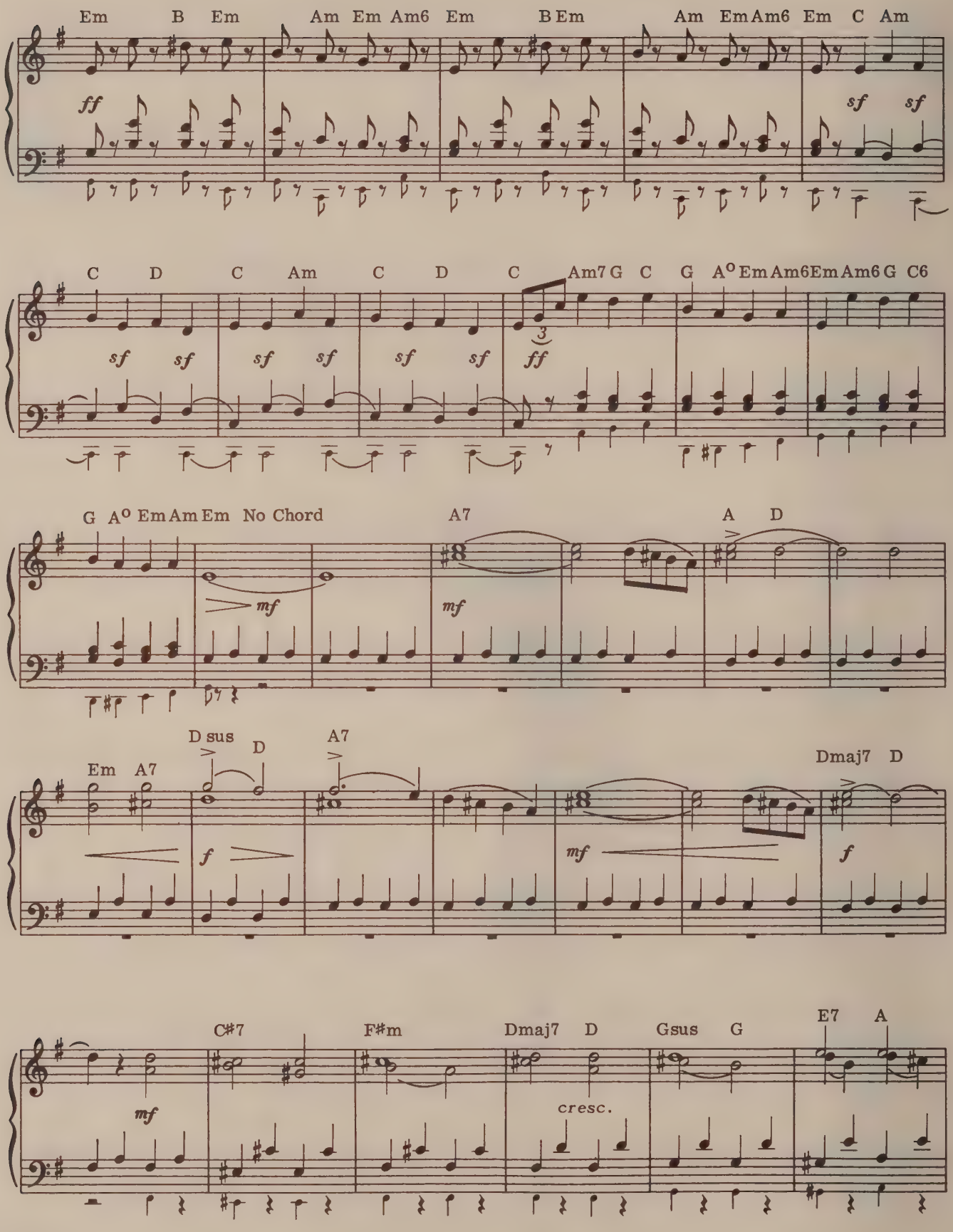

Un poco più animato
Bm6 F♯m Bm6
F♯m Bm6
B° Bm B°
Bm B°
f
ff
Tempo I
Bm G7 E7 A7
A7-5
D
A7
Bm
F♯m
ritenuto
p
B° G6 F♯ Bm
Em7 A Em7 A7
D
A7
f
Poco più mosso
Bm
F♯m
B° G7 F♯ Bm
Em
G7 D°
cresc.
cres - en - do
F♯m
D7 D7+
B7
E C7
F♯7
F∅

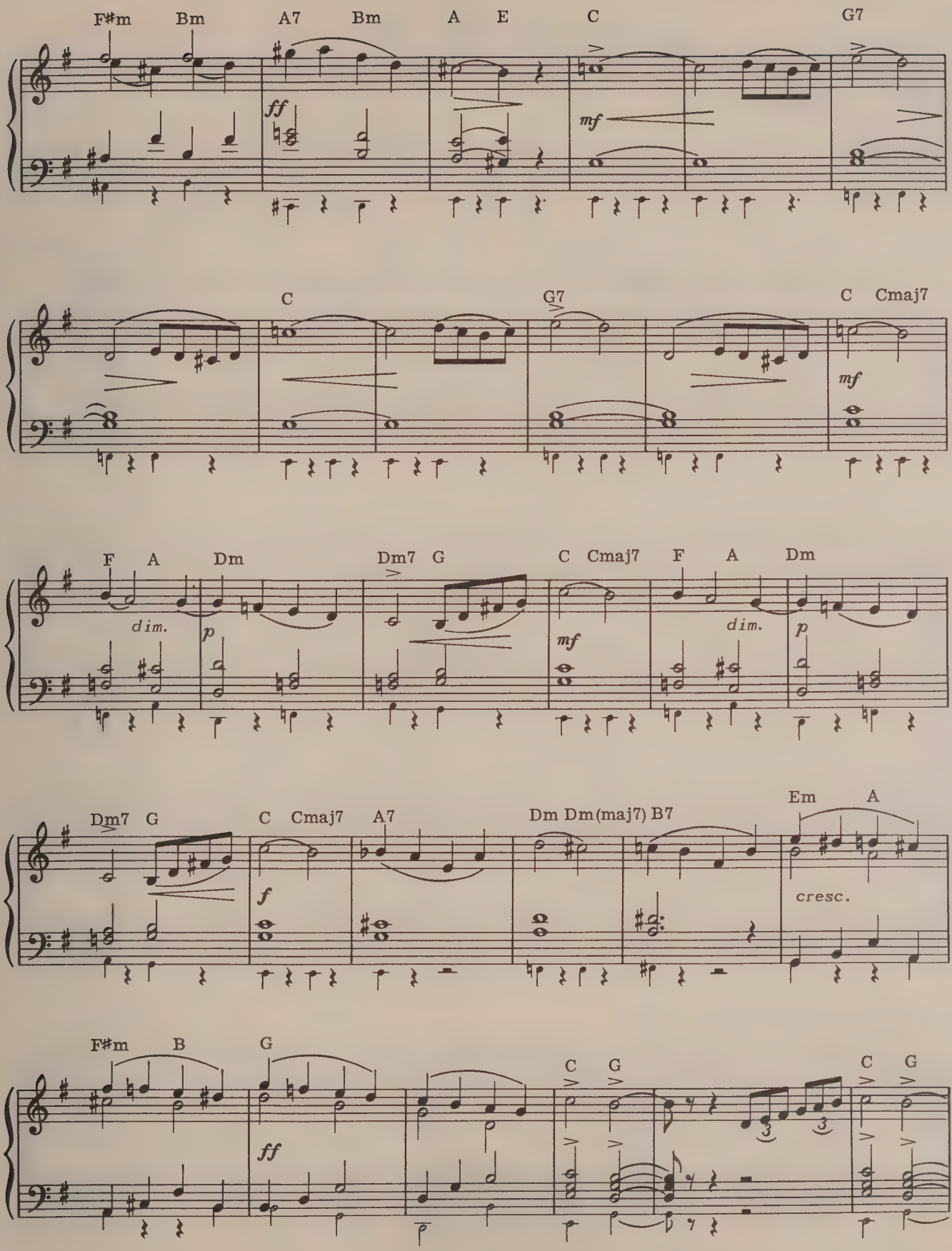

Bm
F° A
Em7 A7
G
Em7 F#
C#m7 F#7 Em
Em7 B♭7
fff
ff
f
D
D°
A7
D
D°
A7
D
p
pp
dim.
VALSE
Allegro moderato
A
A°
E
p dolce
C#m
F#m
B7
E7
No Chord

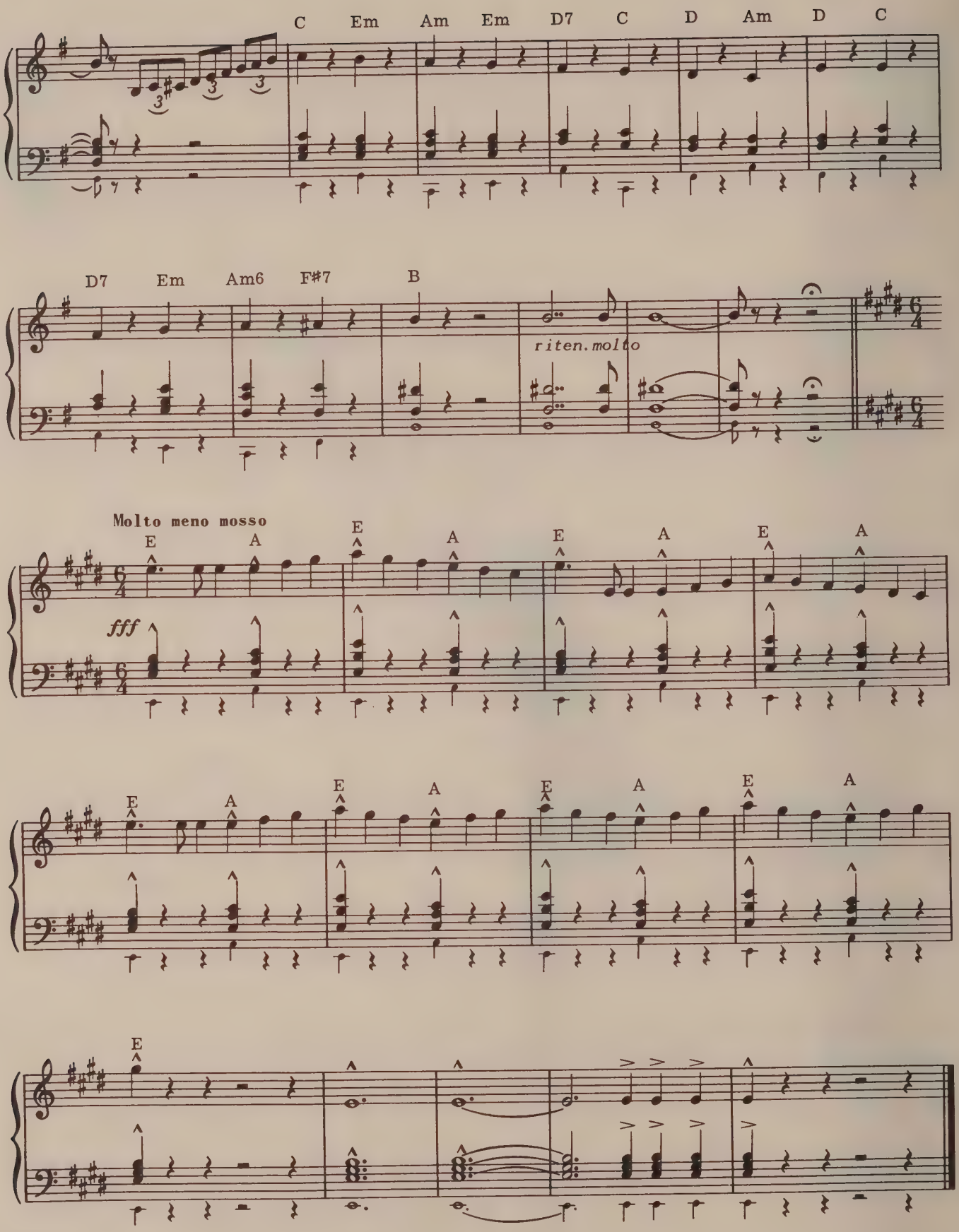

A
B7
E
C♯m
F♯m
B
E
Dm
p
E7
Dm
E7
A
mf
B
E7
Dm
E
Dm
p
E
E7
A
B7
E


No Chord
A
B7
E
C♯m
p
F♯m
B
E
A
mf
F♯m
F♯o
E
B
E
C♯m
E
B
E
f
E o
E7
E o
E7
A o
p
A
F
C7
F
C7
F
C7
F
cresc.

F7
A
E
A
Dm6
pp
A
Dm6
A
Dm6
A
Dm6
A
Dm6
A
Dm6 A
Dm6 A
Dm6
A
Dm6 A
Dm6 A
Dm6
A
ff
FINALE
Andante maestoso
E
A
E
A
E
C♯m
mf
B
C♯m
B
C♯o
G♯m
C♯o
G♯m
C♯m
B
F♯7
B
f


F#m B9 E F#m7 B9 E C#m
p ff
B C#m B C#m G#m F# B C#m B C#m B F#7 B
C G C G Am6 C Am6 G Am6 C Am6 Em B7 Em
sfp pp p f mf p
B7 Em
Allegro Vivace
Em B Em Am Em Am6 Em B Em
f
Am Em Am6 Em Am6 Em Am6 B Em Am6 Em Am6 B

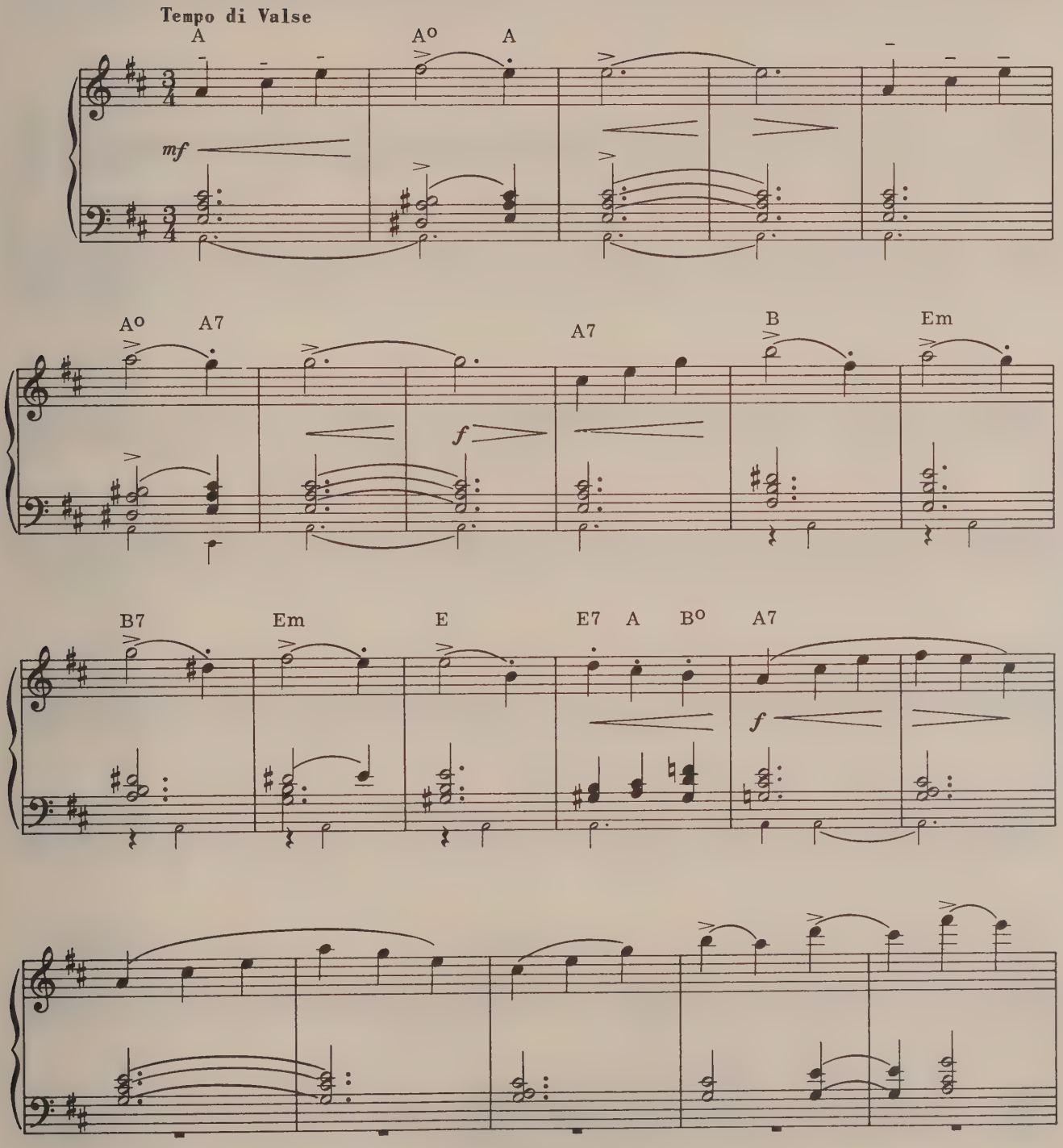

Em B Em Am Em Am6 Em B Em Am Em Am6 Em C Am
ff sf sf
C D C Am C D C Am7 G C G A° Em Am6 Em Am6 G C6
sf sf sf sf sf sf 3 ff
G A° Em Am Em No Chord A7 A D
mf mf
D sus D A7 Dmaj7 D
Em A7
f f mf f
C#7 F#m Dmaj7 D Gsus G E7 A
mf cresc.

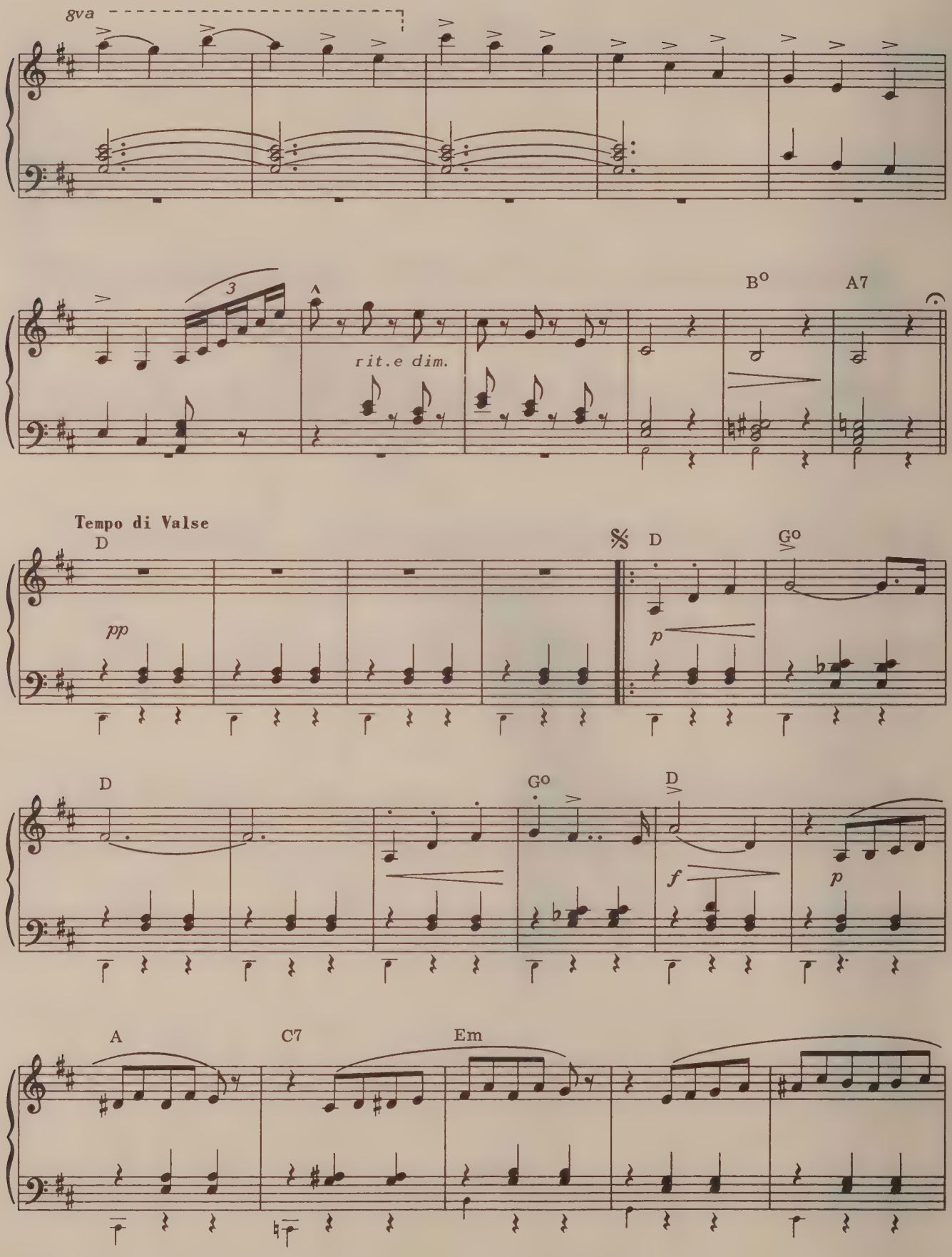

F♯m Bm A7 Bm A E C G7
ff mf
C G7 C Cmaj7
mf
F A Dm Dm7 G C Cmaj7 F A Dm
dim. p mf dim. p
Dm7 G C Cmaj7 A7 Dm Dm(maj7) B7 Em A
f cresc.
F♯m B G C G C G
ff

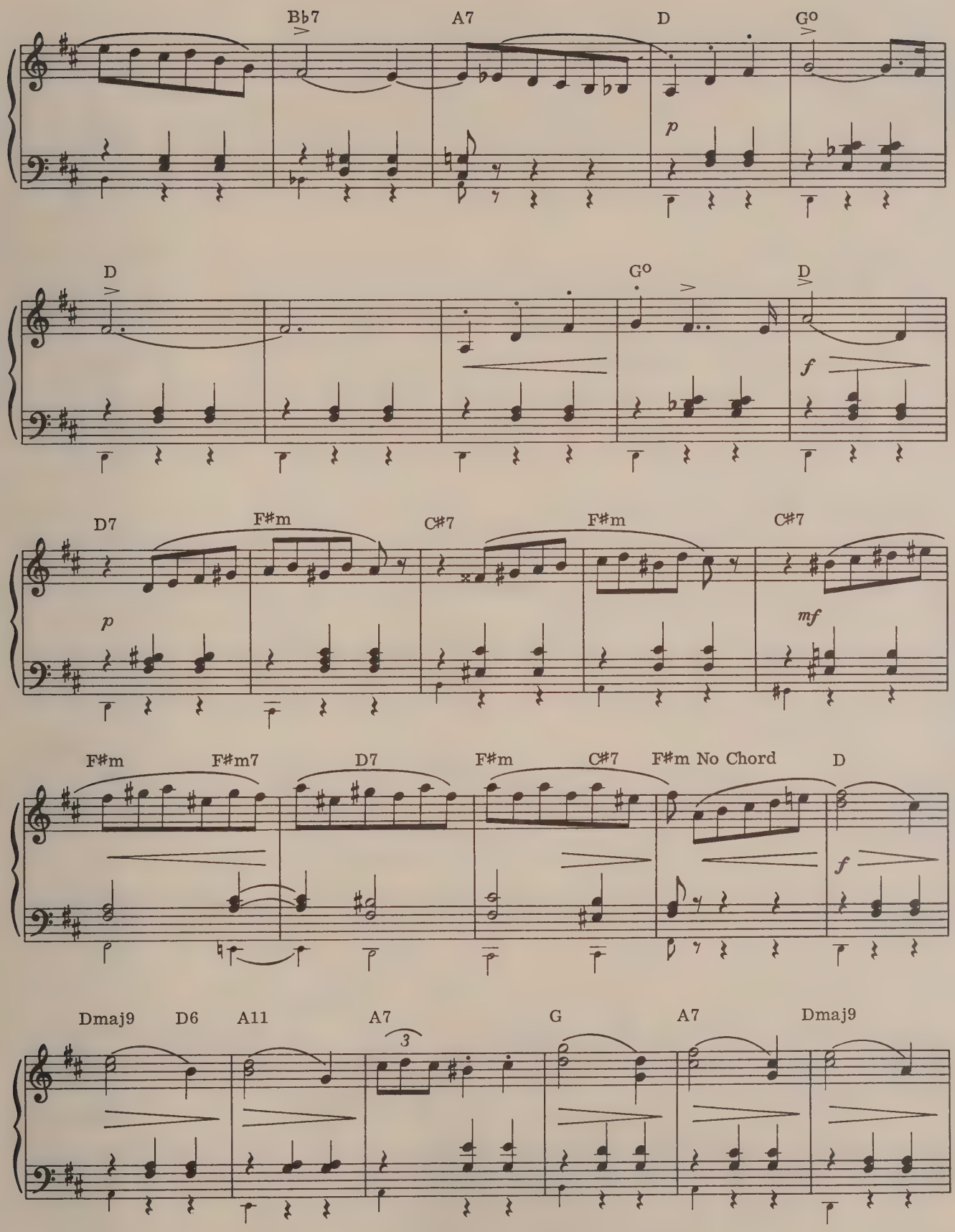

C Em Am Em D7 C D Am D C
D7 Em Am6 F#7 B
riten. molto
Molto meno mosso
E A E A E A E A
fff
E A E A E A E A
E
E A E A E A E A
E

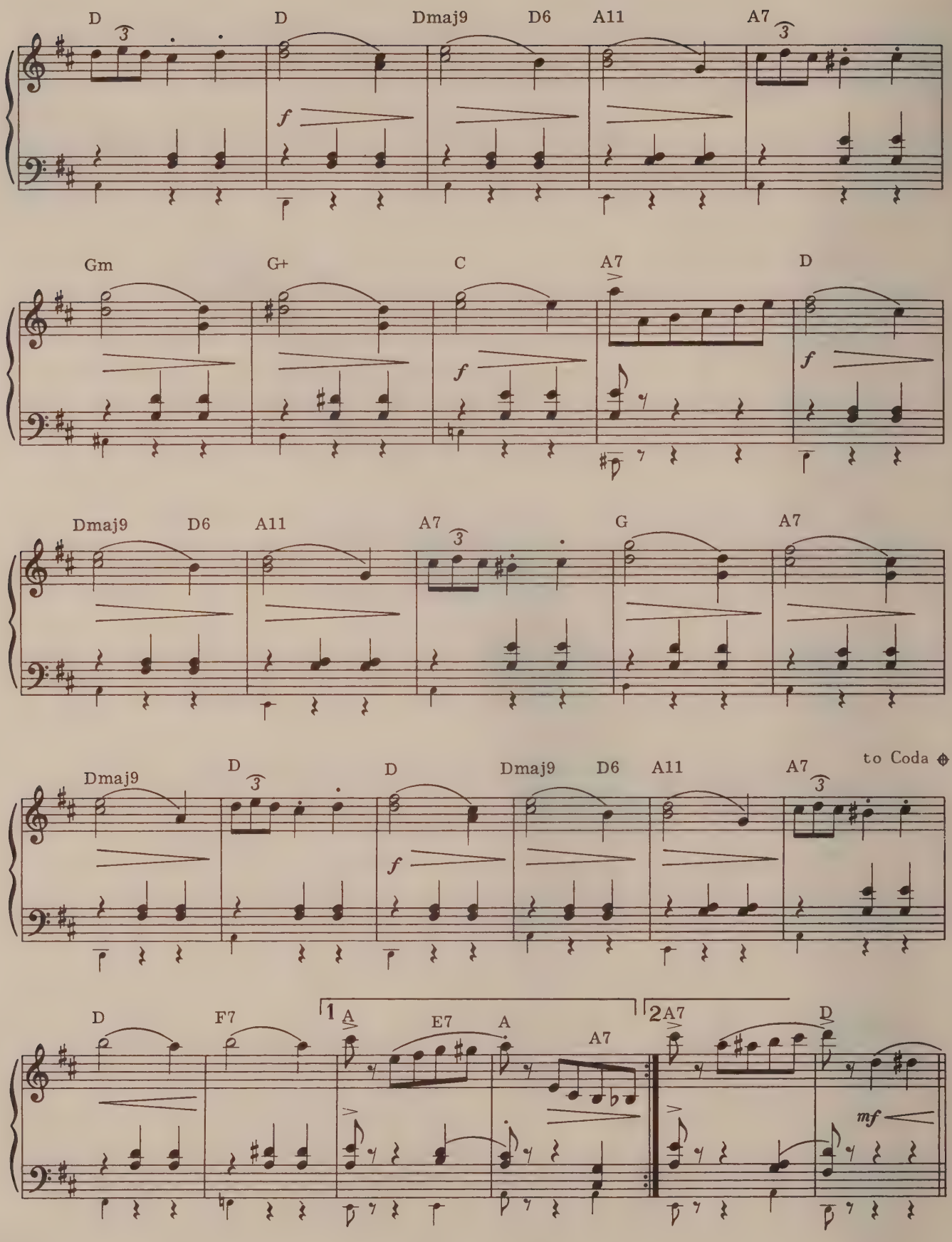
VALSE DES FLEURS
('Casse Noisette')

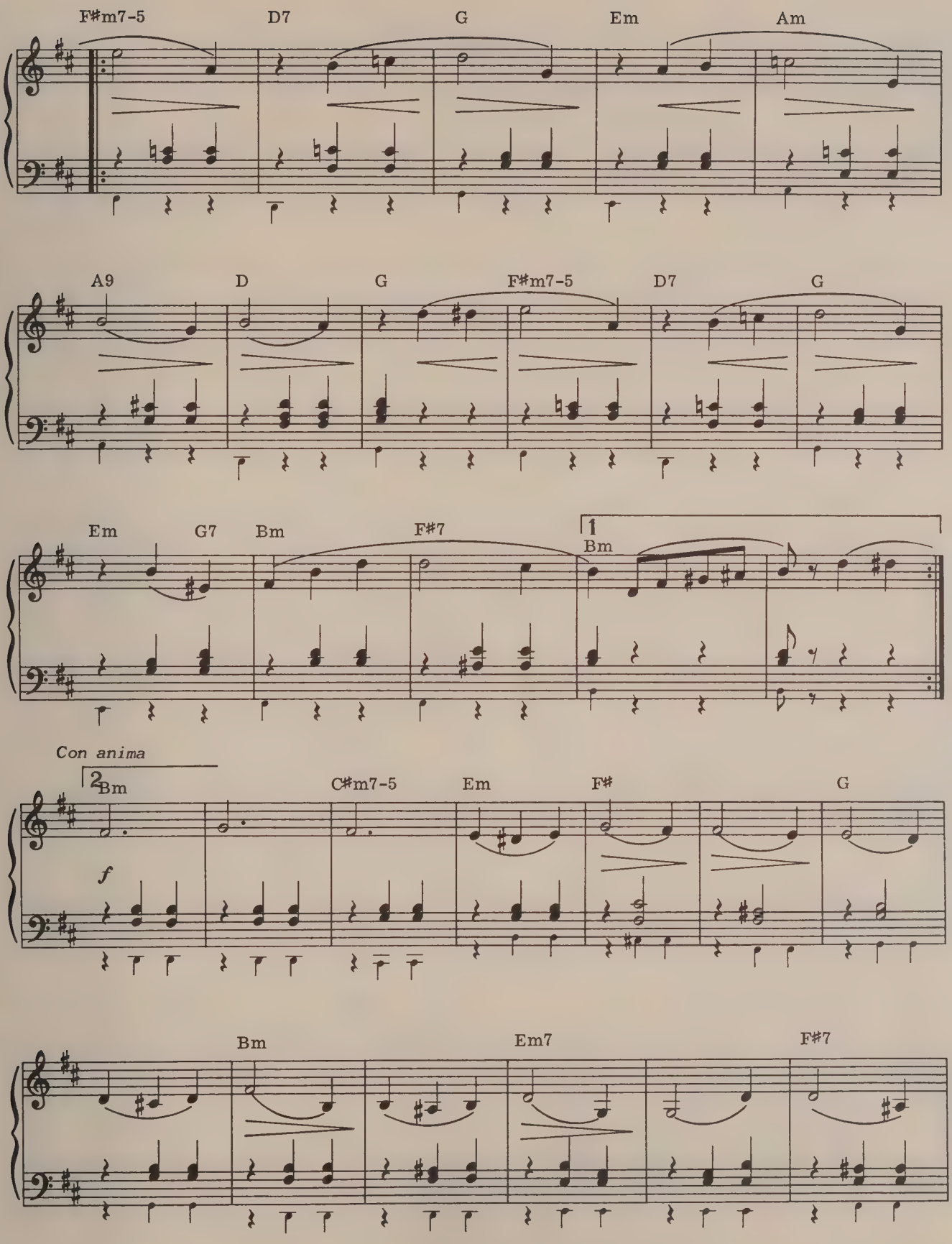
P. I. Tchaikovsky

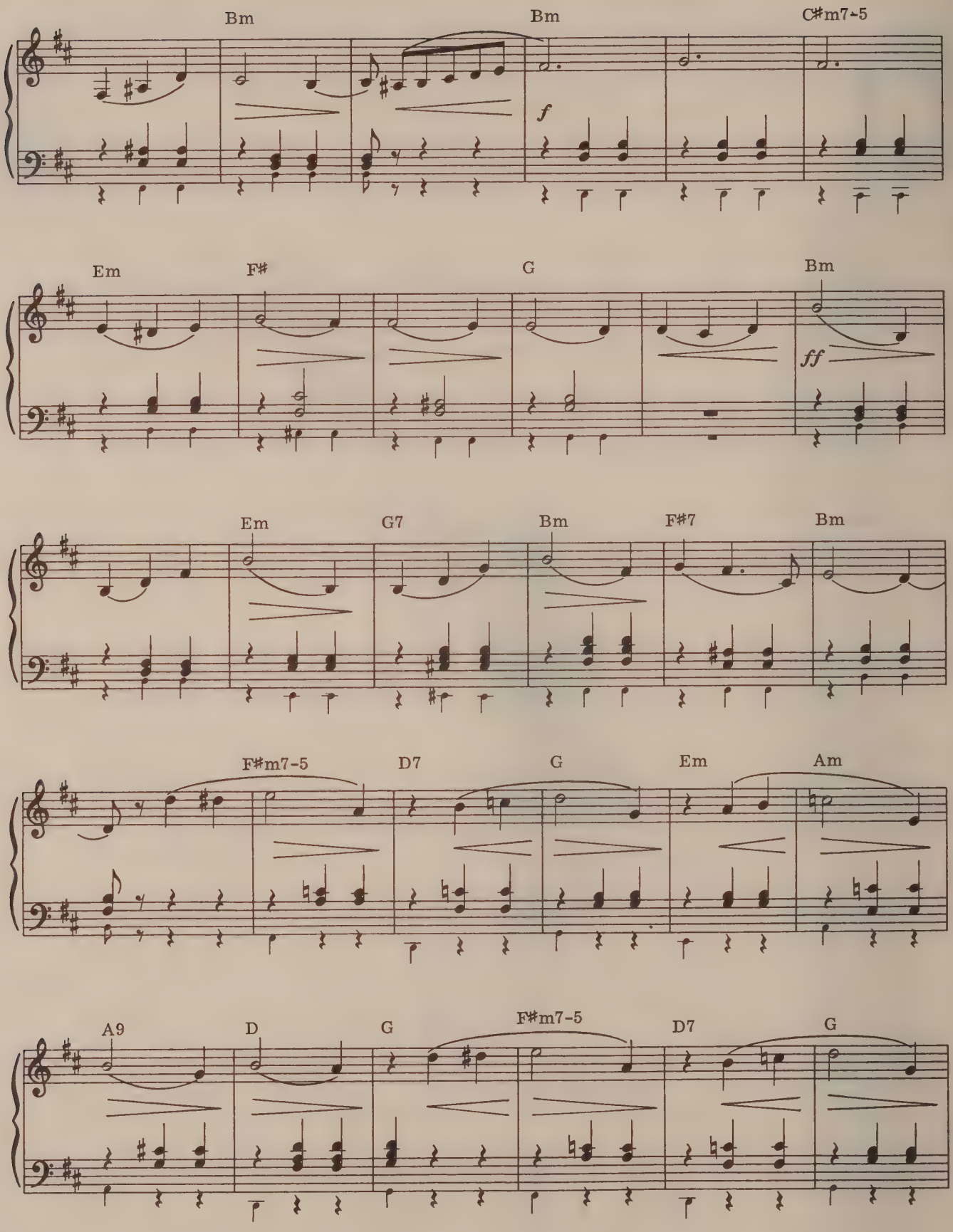


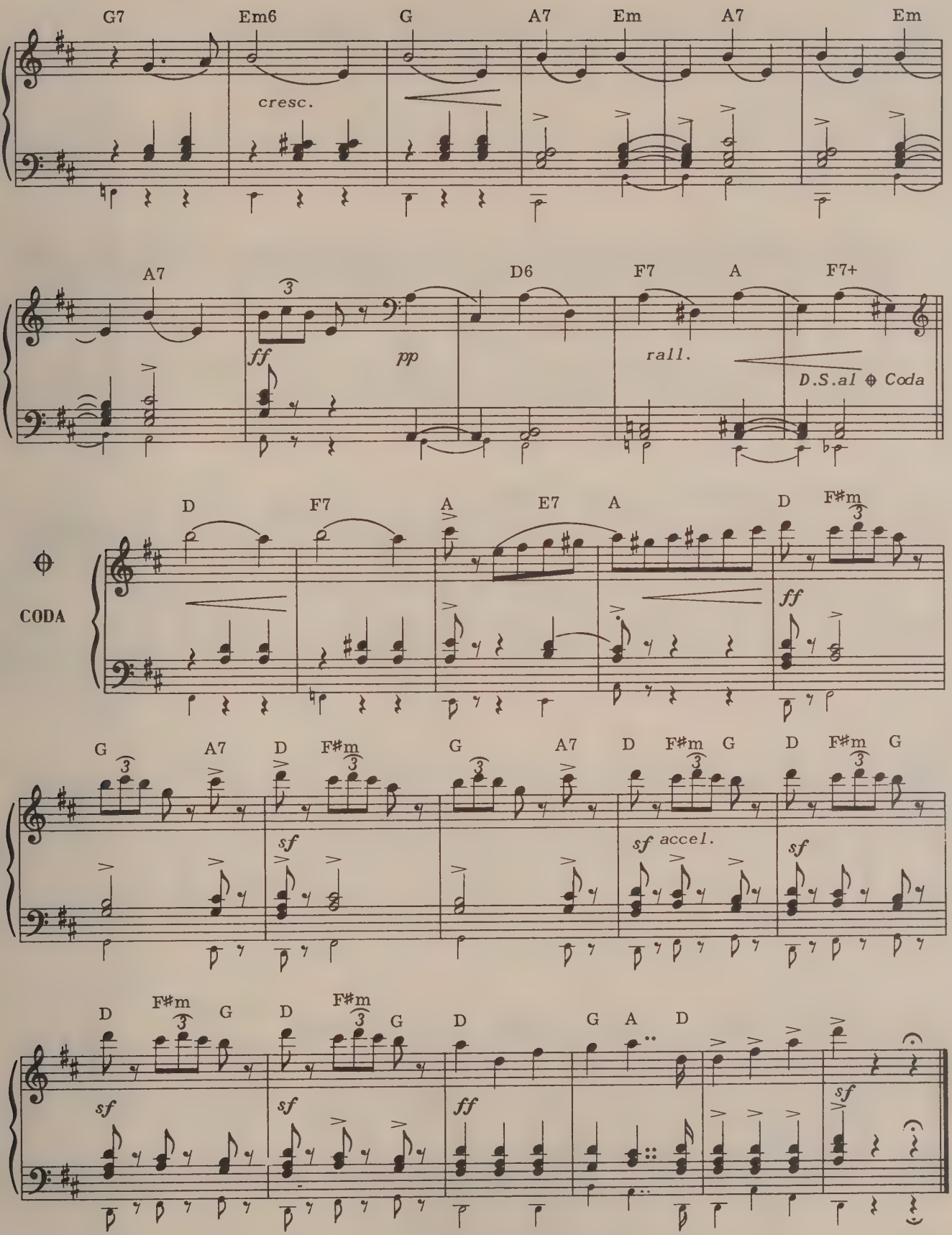

gva
3
rit.e dim.
B°
A7
Tempo di Valse
D
pp
D
p
G°
D
G°
D
f
p
A
C7
Em


B♭7
A7
D
G°
p
D
G°
D
f
D7
F♯m
C♯7
F♯m
C♯7
p
mf
F♯m
F♯m7
D7
F♯m
C♯7
F♯m No Chord
D
f
Dmaj9
D6
A11
A7
3
G
A7
Dmaj9


D
D
Dmaj9
D6
A11
A7
Gm
G+
C
A7
D
Dmaj9
D6
A11
A7
G
A7
Dmaj9
D
D
Dmaj9
D6
A11
A7
to Coda
D
F7
1 A
E7
A
A7
2 A7
D
mf

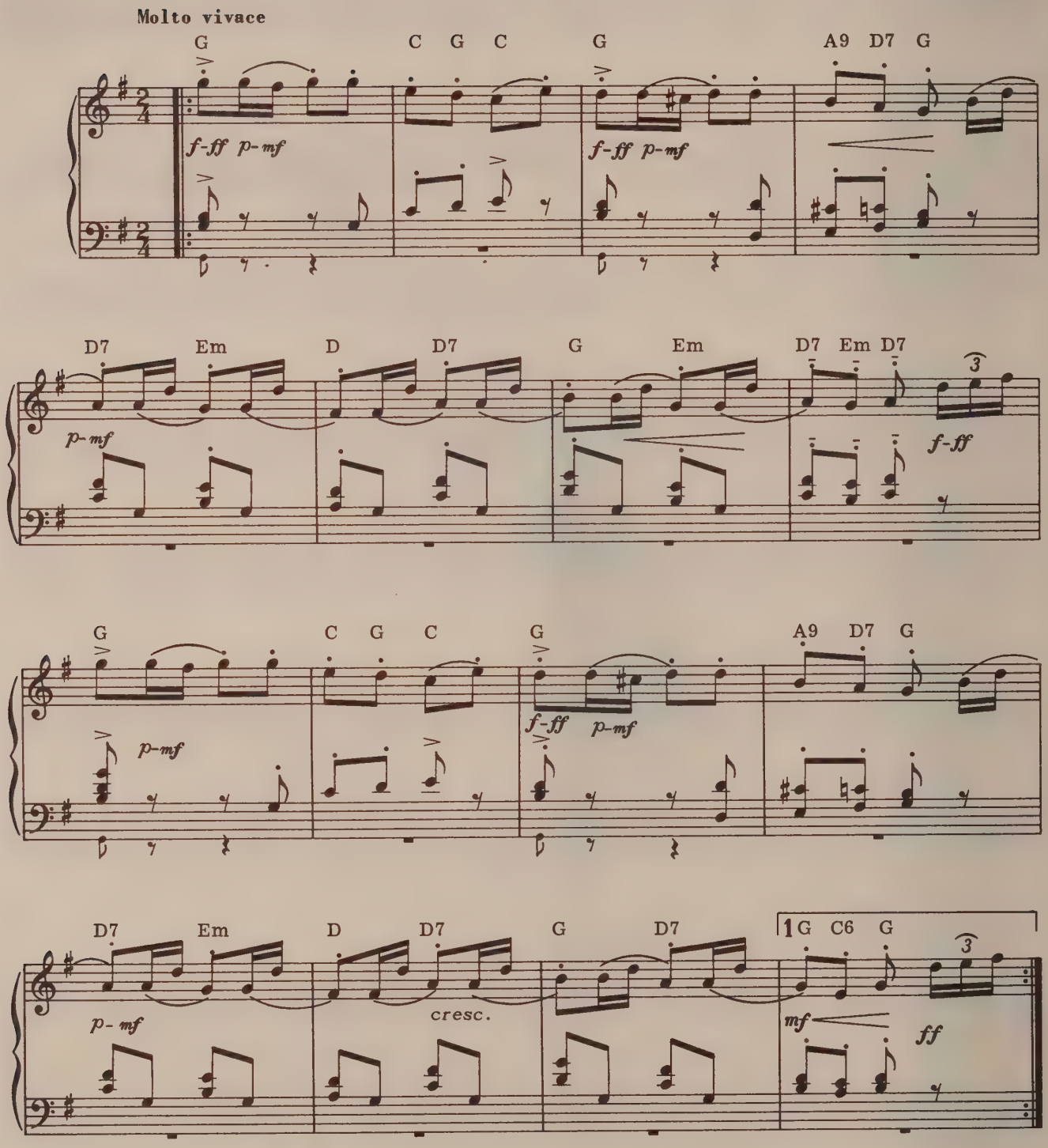

F#m7-5
D7
G
Em
Am
A9
D
G
F#m7-5
D7
G
Em
G7
Bm
F#7
1
Bm
Con anima
2
Bm
C#m7-5
Em
F#
G
f
Bm
Em7
F#7

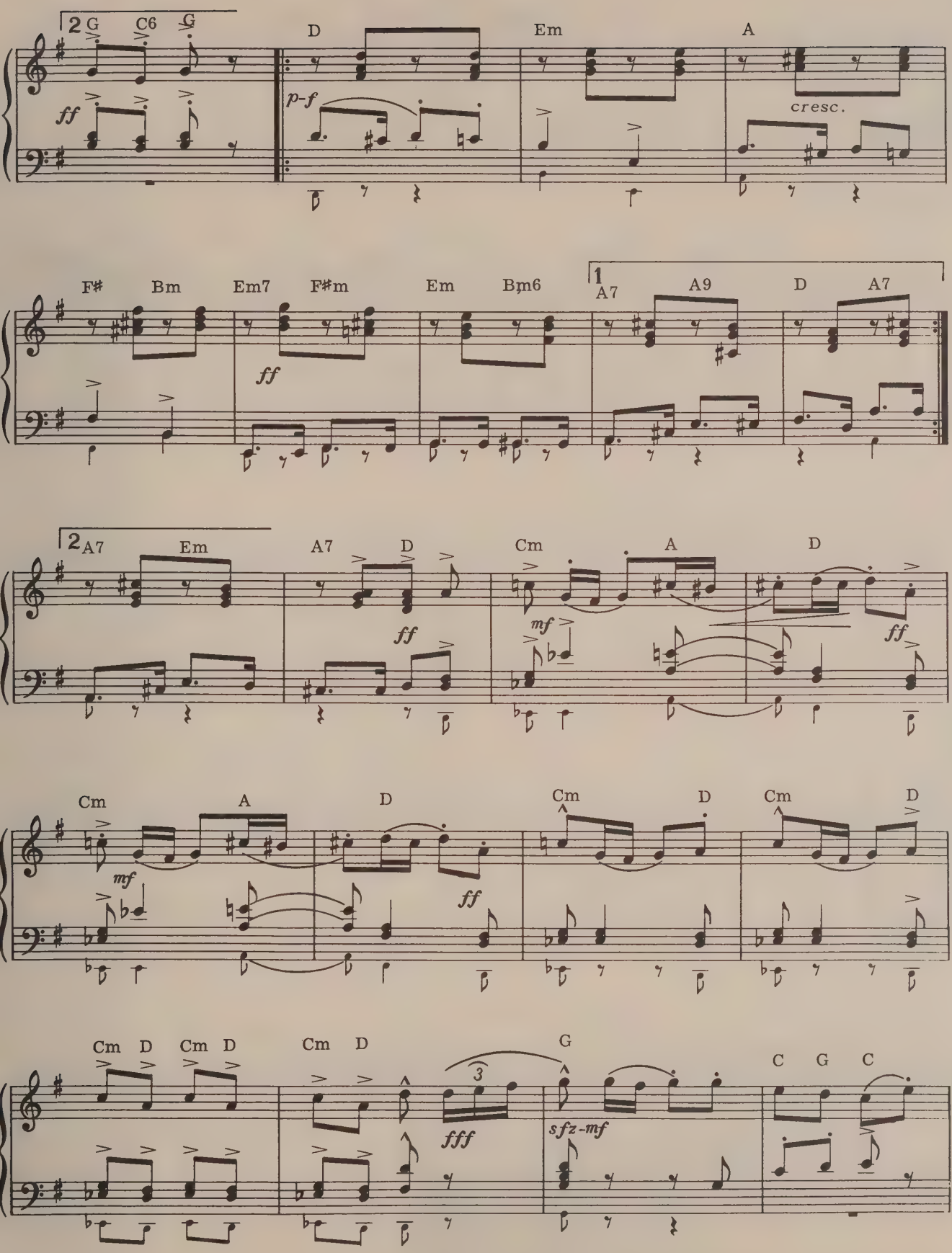

Bm
Bm
C♯m7-5
f
Em
F♯
G
Bm
ff
Em
G7
Bm
F♯7
Bm
F♯m7-5
D7
G
Em
Am
A9
D
G
F♯m7-5
D7
G

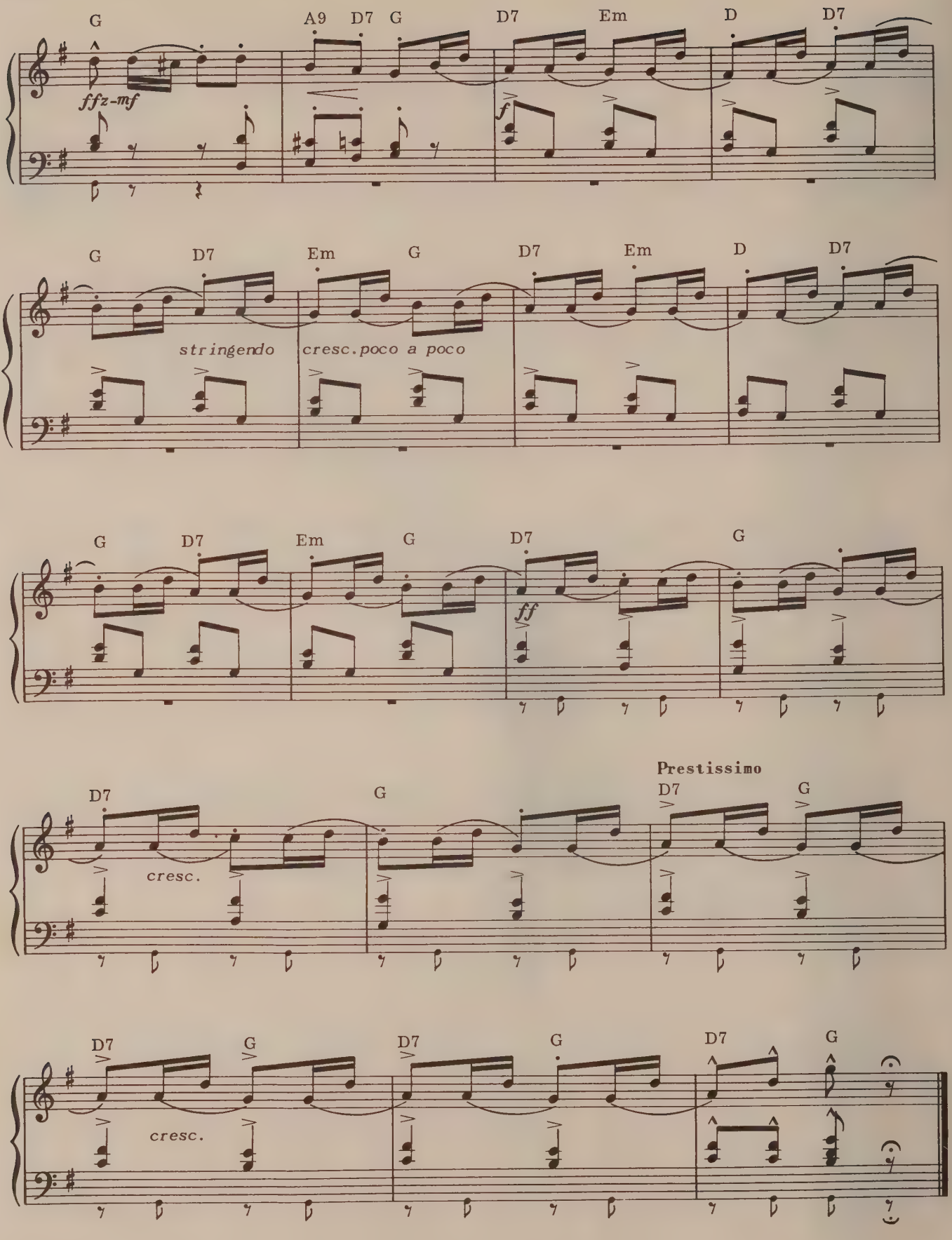

G7
Em6
G
A7
Em
A7
Em
cresc.
A7
D6
F7
A
F7+
ff
pp
rall.
D.S.al ⊕ Coda
⊕
CODA
D
F7
A
E7
A
D
F♯m
ff
G
A7
D
F♯m
G
A7
D
F♯m
G
D
F♯m
G
sf
sf accel.
sf
D
F♯m
G
D
F♯m
G
D
G
A
D
sf
sf
ff
sf

RUSSIAN DANCE 'TREPAK'
('Casse Noisette')

P. I. Tchaikovsky

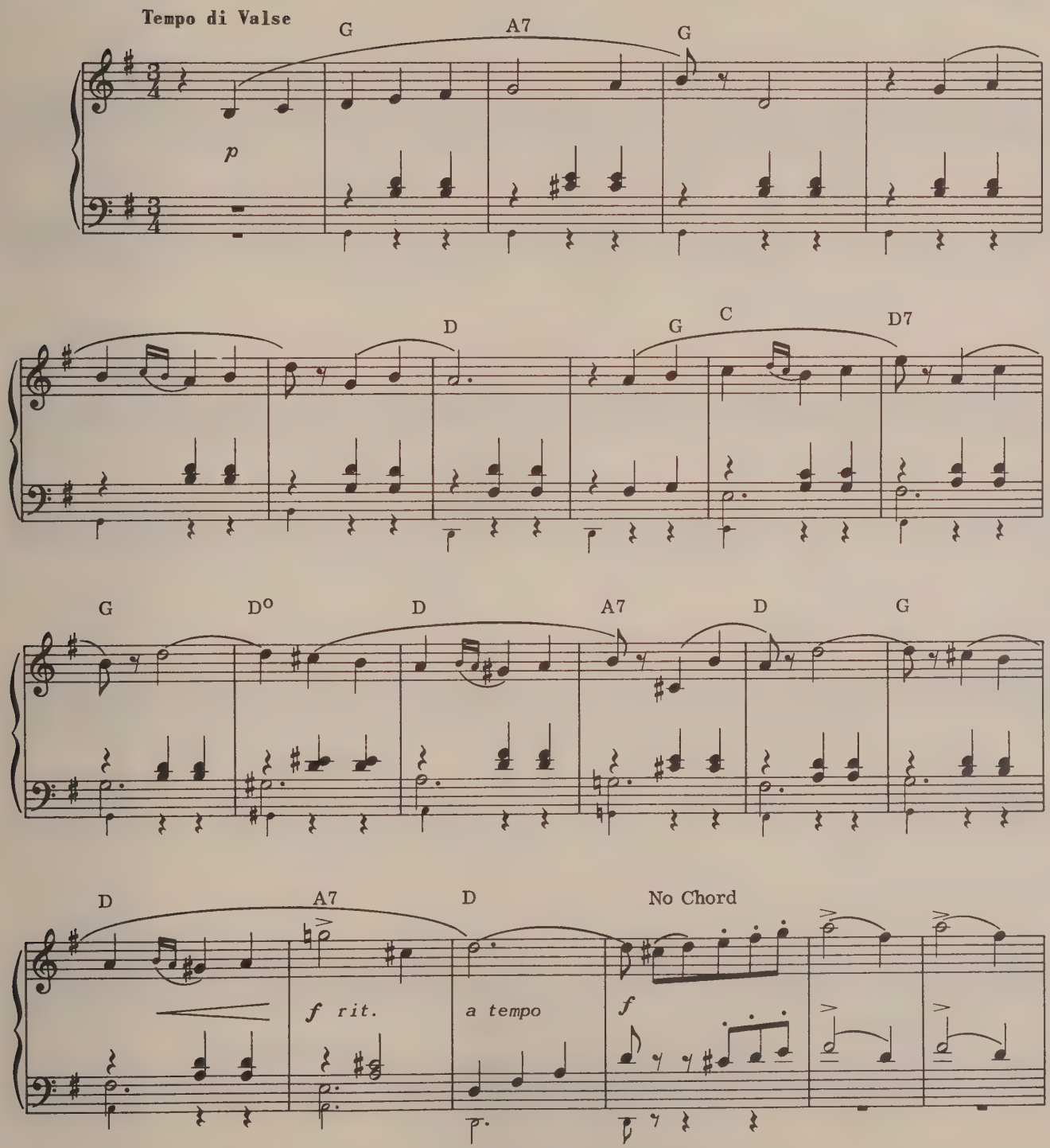


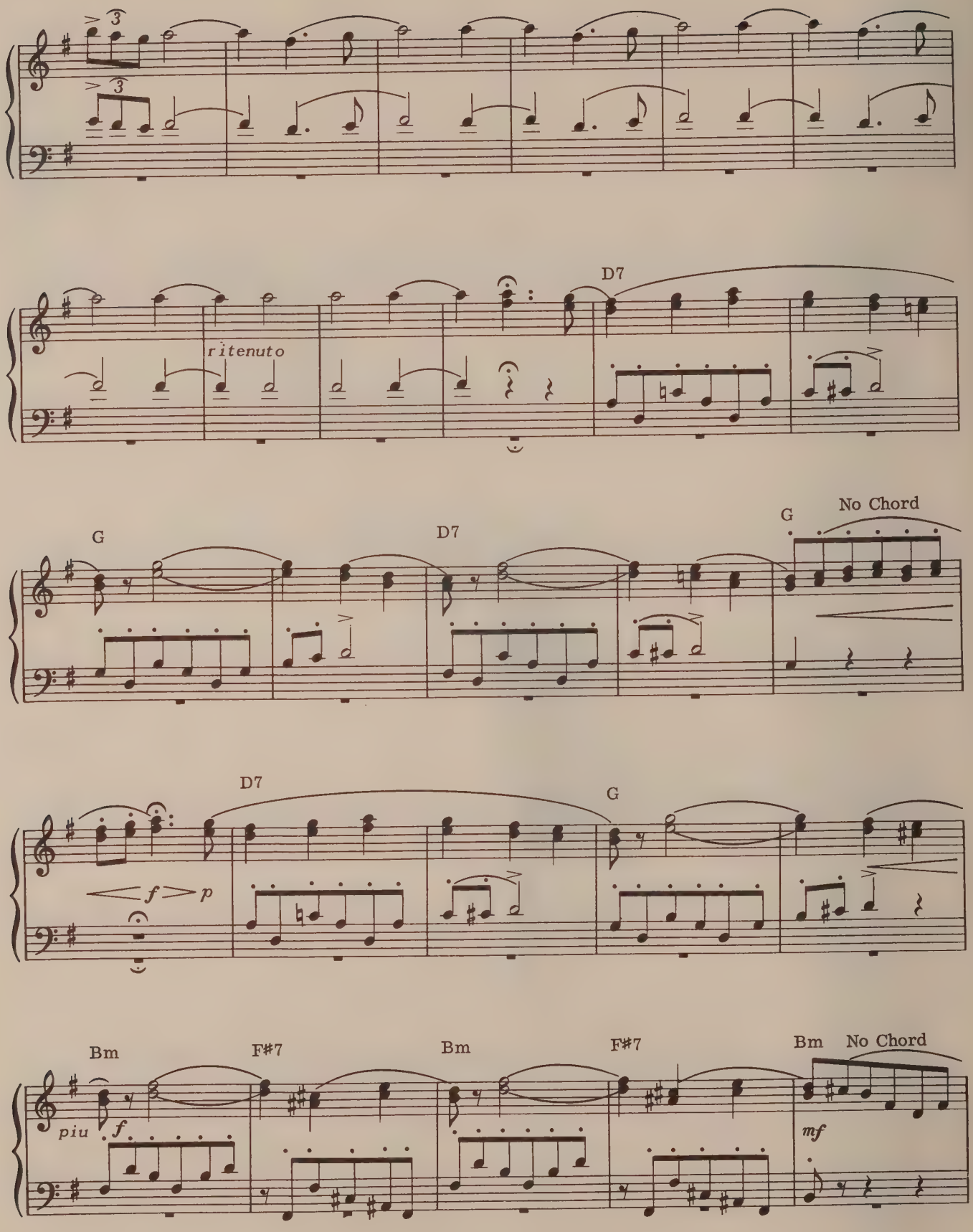

2 G C6 G
D
Em
A
ff
p-f
cresc.
F♯ Bm Em7 F♯m Em B♭m6
1 A7 A9 D A7
ff
2 A7 Em
A7 D
Cm A
D
ff
mf
Cm A D
Cm D Cm D
Cm D
G
C G C
fff
sfz-mf

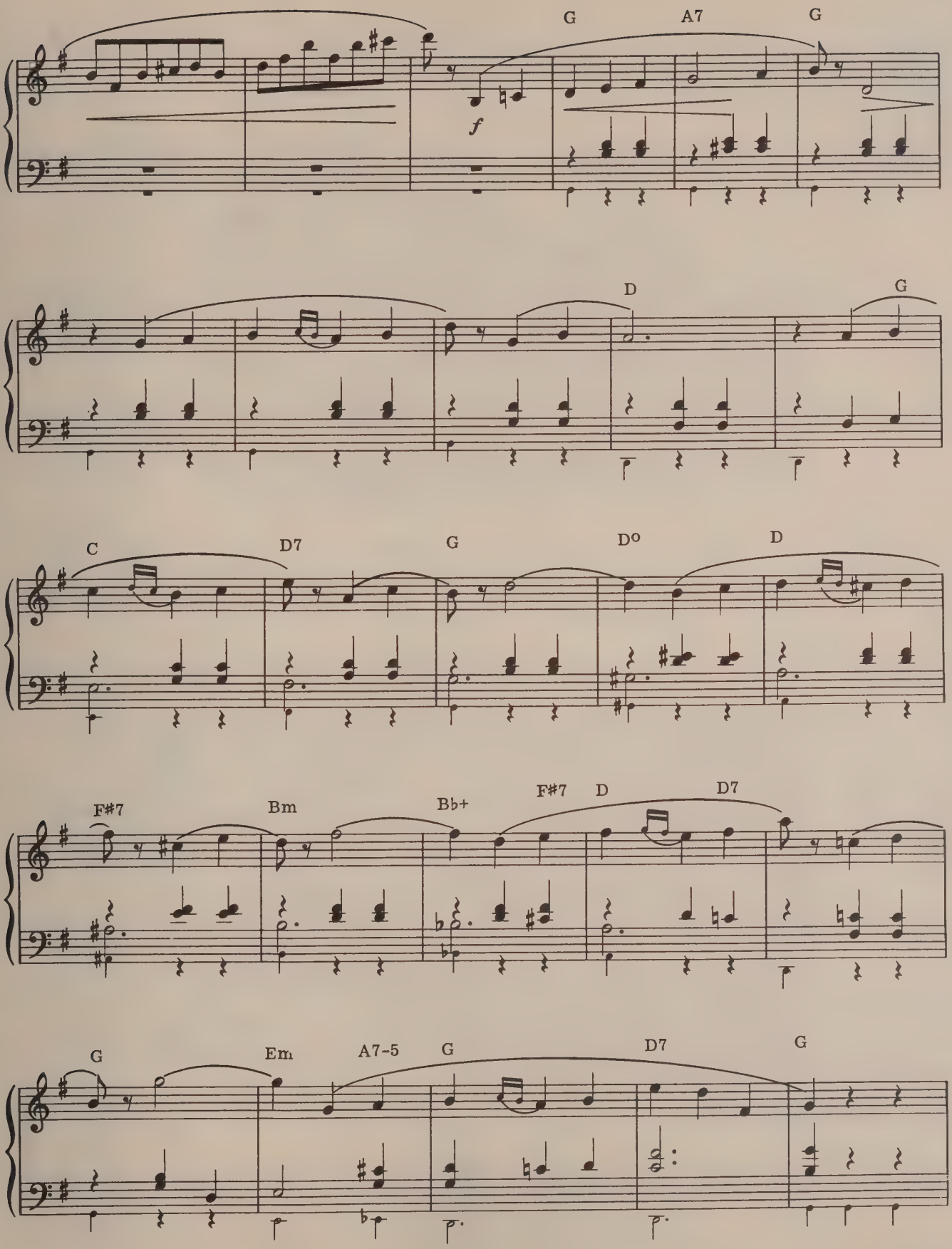

G
A9 D7 G
D7
Em
D
D7
ffz-mf
f
G D7 Em G D7 Em D D7
stringendo
cresc. poco a poco
G D7 Em G D7 G
ff
D7 G
Prestissimo
D7 G
cresc.
D7 G D7 G D7 G
cresc.

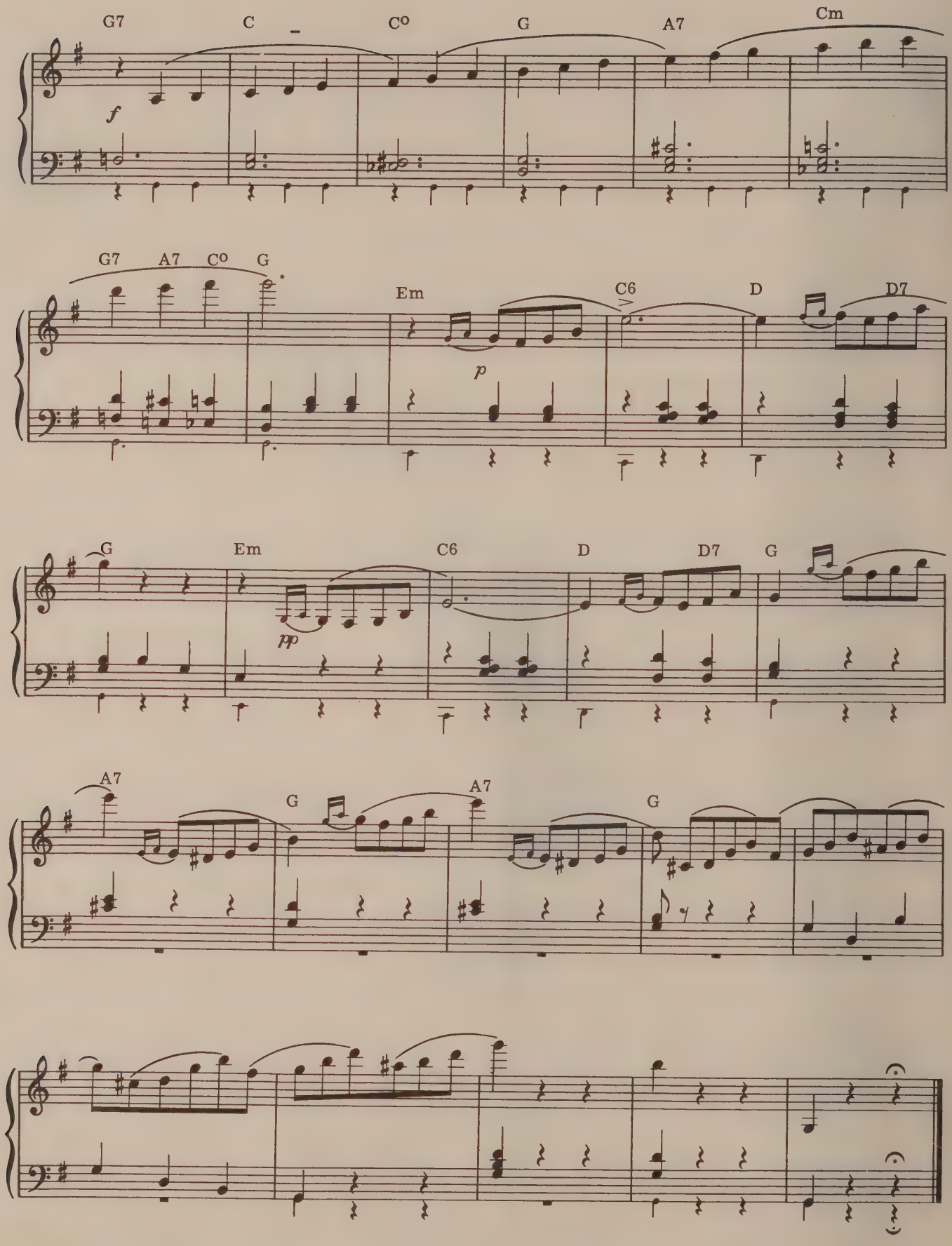
WALTZ from SERENADE FOR STRINGS

P. I. Tchaikovsky




3
3
ritenuto
D7
G
D7
G
No Chord
D7
G
f
p
Bm
F#7
Bm
F#7
Bm
No Chord
piu
f
mf


G
A7
G
f
D
G
C
D7
G
Do
D
F#7
Bm
Bb+
F#7
D
D7
G
Em
A7-5
G
D7
G



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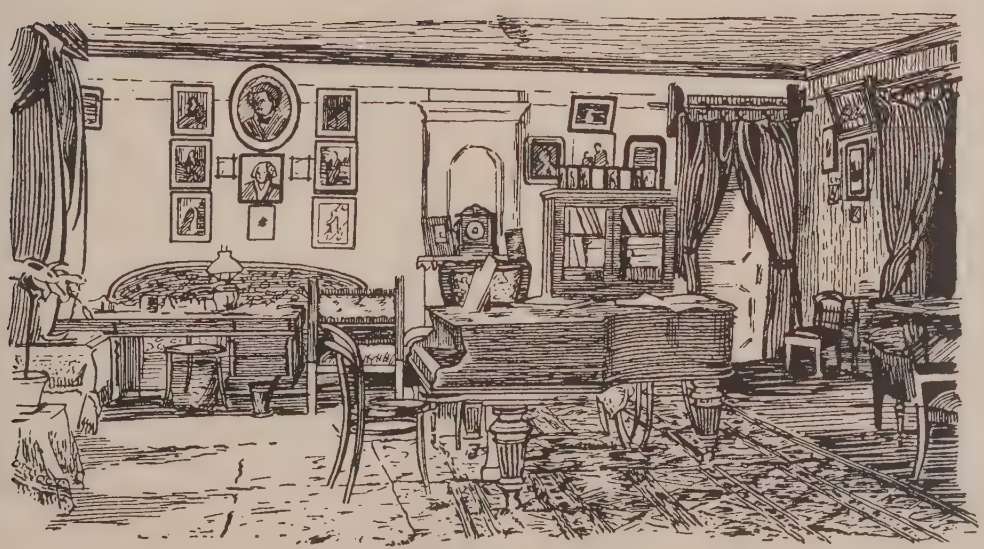
TSCHAIKOWSKY'S HOUSE AT KLIN.



TSCHAIKOWSKY'S DRAWING-ROOM AT KLIN.

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WALTZ from SERENADE FOR STRINGS

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